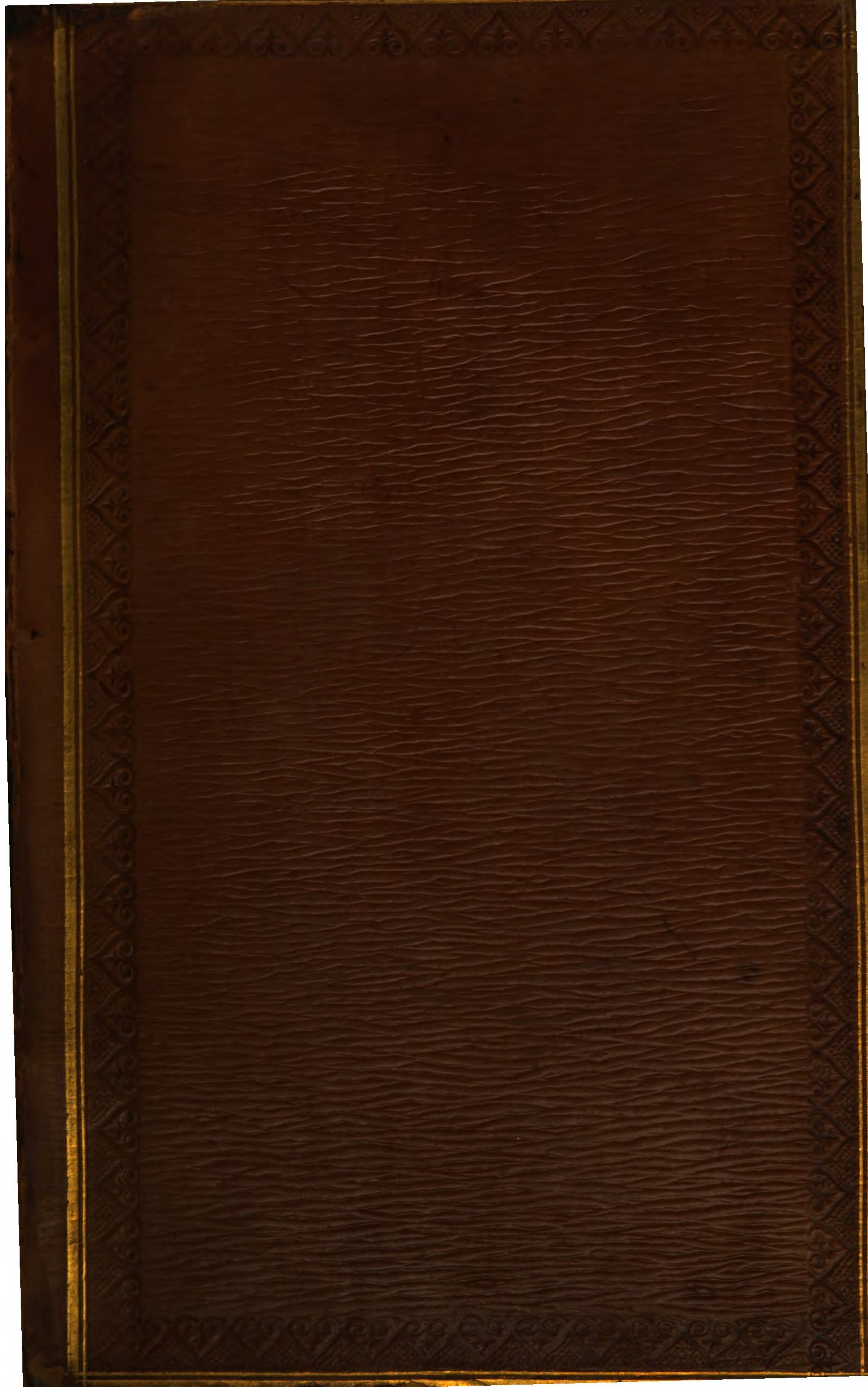




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Haldane

THE
THEORY AND PRACTICE
OF
DIVINE REVELATION

To Mr. May
with Mrs. Gordon's best compliments

THE
EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY
OF
DIVINE REVELATION.

1816

Divine Revelation

TESTIMONY

LAW AND THE PROPHETS

THE

STUDY AND AUTHORITY

OF

DIVINE REVELATION

THE
EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY
OF
Divine Revelation.

BEING A VIEW OF THE
TESTIMONY
OF THE
LAW AND THE PROPHETS
TO THE
Messiah,
WITH
THE SUBSEQUENT TESTIMONIES.

~~~~~  
BY  
**ROBERT HALDANE.**

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To HIM give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.—*Acts x. 43.*

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

**EDINBURGH:**

*Printed by A. Balfour, Merchant Court,*

FOR OLIPHANT, WAUGH AND INNES, A. BLACK,  
J. OGLE, AND W. WHYTE :

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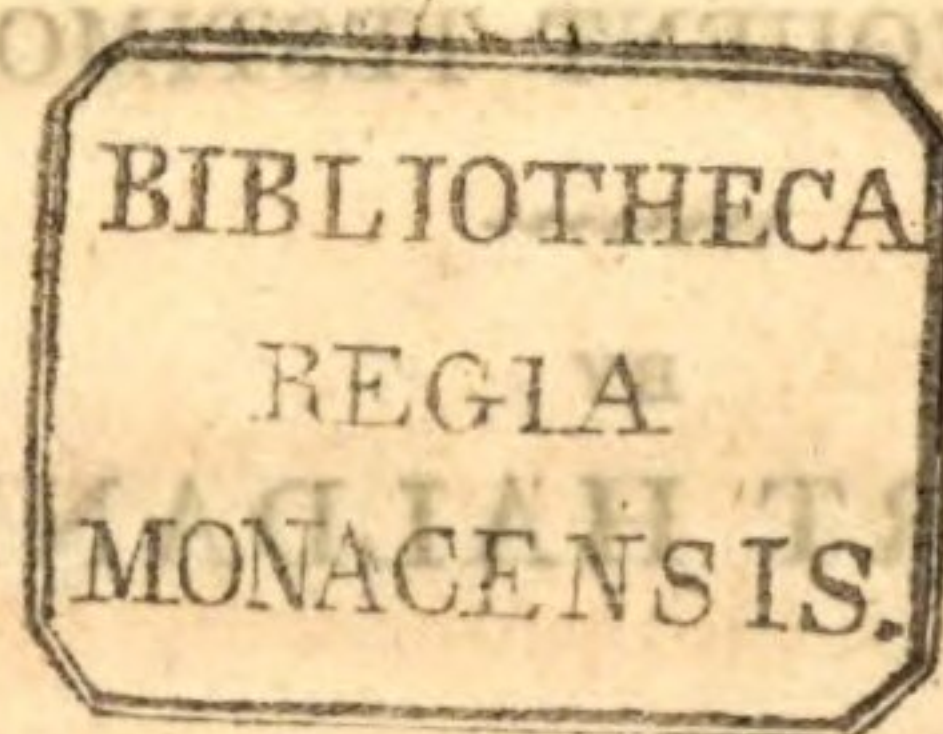
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## CHAP. I.

### *General Expectation of the Messiah.*

HAVING taken a view of the History, Miracles, Types, and Prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, it is material to attend to the effect which, by their means, was produced. This effect, as might be anticipated, was very great. A *general expectation* was excited throughout the world, that a great King would appear in Judea, at the period which the prophecies foretold.

The whole nation of Israel was full of this expectation. Speaking of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, Luke, the sacred historian, says, "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he was the Messiah or not." On the appearance of John, "the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? but he confessed, I am not the Christ.—And they which were



sent were of the Pharisees." On witnessing one of the miracles of Jesus, the multitude said, "Of a truth, this is that Prophet that should come into the world."

Celsus, the philosopher, in opposing Christianity, makes use of this general expectation of the Messiah that existed among the Jews. Assuming the character of a Jew, he says, "How could we, *who had told all men* there would come one from God, who should punish the wicked, despise him when he came?" "The prophets," he adds, "say that *he who is to come* is great, and a Prince, and Lord of all the earth, and of all the nations and armies." In another place, he says, "The contentions between the Jews and Christians is very silly, *both sides believing that it had been foretold by the Spirit of God, that a Saviour of mankind is to come.* But they do not agree whether he who has been prophesied of is come or not."

A proof of this expectation is found in the appearance of false Messiahs. At the period when the true Messiah appeared, a number of pretenders to that character came forward. No false Messiahs are heard of before that age, nor so many in any age after. But when the prophetical weeks of Daniel drew to a conclu-



sion, these impostors were very frequent, and misled many, both of the Jews and Samaritans.

This expectation was not confined to the Jews. It was general throughout the world. By means of the Babylonish captivity, that lasted 70 years, from which many of the Jews never returned, together with the subsequent changes they experienced, they were dispersed all over the world. But wherever they went, they retained their religion, and carried the Scriptures with them, which were publicly read in their synagogues every Sabbath-day. The prophecies being thus repeated among their heathen neighbours, became familiar to them, and were received as if they had been predictions of their own oracles. By this means, also, the ancient traditions from the first generations of men, from whence some glimmerings of light still remained, began to be revived. Poets and others, reminded of the "golden age," and adopting the magnificent ideas of Jewish prophecy, foretold that it would be again restored to the world.

It is not surprising that the early promises concerning the Messiah, and of the important change he was to produce in the world, should have been handed down among the nations, especially among the different descendants of Abra-



ham throughout the East. Various accounts of them, more or less distinct, as of the original form of worship by sacrifice, which tended to perpetuate them, would be long preserved. Whether or not the first Sibylline oracles at Rome contained any of these original predictions, cannot be known, as they were always kept secret, and only made use of as served the purposes of the government. Although the Sibyls were probably imaginary persons, and the story of the manner in which Tarquin possessed himself of these books, entirely fabulous, they may have contained, along with much fiction, a mixture of traditional truth, derived from the early ages. But however this may be, it is certain that there were such prophetic intimations in the second Sibylline books.

About a century before the Christian era, the first Sibylline books were destroyed by a fire which broke out in the capitol, and consumed the temple where these writings were deposited. The Roman senate thought it of so much importance to repair the loss, that they sent some of their number to make a new collection of them in different parts of Asia, in the islands of the Archipelago, in Africa, and in Sicily. The deputies after some time returned, with about



1000 verses in the Greek language, which they had collected from different individuals. These verses, when brought to Rome, could not be entirely concealed as the ancient Sibylline books had been, but were in the hands of many private individuals. The use which the senate proposed to make of them as a state engine, as of the former books, being thus in a good measure defeated, a law was enacted that whoever had copies of these prophecies, should deliver them to the Prætor of the city; and all were prohibited, under pain of death, to retain any of them. Transcripts, however, continued to be privately kept, owing to which their contents were well known. At length Augustus, on taking upon himself the high-priesthood of Rome, revived the law, when many volumes were brought in. That this new collection of Sibylline verses contained a prediction of the appearance of a great King, we have sufficient evidence from the following circumstance.

When Julius Cæsar had attained the height of his power, he was very ambitious of having the title of King. In order to gain the consent of the senate, one of his adherents produced a prophecy from the Sibylline books, of a king who



was to arise at this time, whose monarchy was to be universal, and whose government would be necessary and essential to the happiness of the world. Cicero, and the party to which he belonged, did all in their power in opposition to this plea. But in opposing it, Cicero brought no charge of falsification against those who produced this prophecy. *He granted that it was fairly alleged, from the Sibylline books, to which, from his office, he had free access. But he affirmed that these oracles were no prophecies; for that no marks were to be found in them of frenzy and disorder, (which Heathens conceived to be the necessary state of every prophet's mind while he prophesied.)* “Let us then,” says Cicero, “adhere to the prudent practice of our ancestors; let us keep the Sibyl in religious privacy; these writings are indeed *rather calculated to extinguish than to propagate superstition.*”\*

Besides those predictions, which had been brought to Rome from the East by the deputies from the senate, the contents of the Jewish Scriptures were no secret at Rome. An intimate alliance had long subsisted between the

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\* See Horsley's Dissertation, Henley's Observations, and Prideaux's Connection.



Romans and the Jews, and the numbers of the latter resident at Rome were very considerable. From the accounts preserved so long after by Tacitus and Florus, of what Pompey saw in the temple at Jerusalem, the particulars of the Jewish religion, which is referred to by Cicero in writing to Lælius, must have been well known at Rome. Under the patronage of Julius Cæsar, the free exercise of their religious rites, with all the privileges of their priesthood, was not only confirmed to them by the decrees of the senate, but they were exempted also from taxes on their Sabbatical year. Hence, and from the public recital in their synagogues, every Sabbath day, of the law and the prophets, and the translation of them into a language universally read, their sacred books must have been known both in the provinces and capital of the empire. The singularities in their ritual customs and history, with which their prophecies were inseparably blended, could not fail to attract some attention; while their origin, and even existence as a distinct people, all looked forward to one great object of consummation,—the coming of their predicted sovereign, under whom, notwithstanding their present misfortunes, they expected a restoration, and the acquisition of unbounded and eternal dominion.



All this fully explains the cause of that general expectation which now existed at Rome of the appearance of a great King who should establish universal empire, which had long been current all over the East, and which, according to Tacitus, was believed to have its origin in the Jewish Scriptures. By pretended prodigies, and in various ways, much use was made of this expectation, and different applications of it appeared, according to the interest or wishes of those who made them.

Sallust relates, that, owing to this expectation, Lentulus was incited to engage in Cataline's conspiracy, and vaunted that the King thus foretold would arise in the Cornelian family.

"Julius Marathus," says Suetonius, "tells us, that a few months before his (Augustus) birth, a prodigy happened at Rome, by which was signified, that *nature* was about to bring forth a King for the Roman people; and that the senate, being alarmed by it, came to a resolution, that no child born that year should be brought up; but that those among them whose wives were pregnant, in order to secure to themselves a prospect of that dignity, took care that the resolution of the senate should not be registered in the treasury."



The use which Virgil has made of this general expectation is well known, which he applies in different ways ; first in his Pastorals, and then in his *Æneid*. He wrote his celebrated fourth Eclogue in the consulship of Asinius Pollio, during the months of the pregnancy of Scribonia Pollio's wife. To the child to be born he attributes in that poem the character of this great King who was to appear, and ascribes to his reign the same happy effects which are anticipated by the Hebrew prophets. He begins with saying, that “ the last age of the Cumean prophecy is come ; the great order of ages again commences ; the virgin is already returning, and the Saturnian reign.”

“ The last great Age, foretold by sacred rhymes,  
Renews its finish'd course ; Saturnian times  
Roll round again ; and mighty years, begun  
From their first orb, in radiant circles run.  
The base degenerate iron offspring ends ;  
A golden progeny from heav'n descends ;  
O, chaste Lucina, speed the mother's pains,  
And haste the glorious birth !”

What Virgil means by the renewal of the Saturnian times, or reign, is explained by referring to his account of it in the *Æneid*. Speaking of Saturn, he says—



“ He by just laws embodied all the train  
 Who roam'd the hills, and drew them to the plain :  
 There fix'd ; and Latium call'd the new abode,  
 Whose friendly shores conceal'd the latent god.  
 These realms in peace the monarch long controll'd,  
 And bless'd the nations with an *age of gold*.”

According to this Eclogue, the son to be born was to be the offspring of the gods, the great seed of Jupiter. He was to command the world, and to introduce peace. He was to abolish violence and injustice, and to restore the life of man to its original innocence and happiness. He was to KILL THE SERPENT. The blessings of his reign were to extend to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The latter was to be purged of its poisons, and the nature of the most savage beasts was to be changed, so that the lowing herds should feed secure from lions. Still there were to remain some traces of ancient fraud. Great cities should still be encompassed with walls, and wars should be excited ; but at length, under this Sovereign, all was to be composed and happy,—when

“ No plough shall hurt the glebe, no pruning hook the vine.

The Fates, when they this happy web have spun,  
 Shall bless the sacred clue, and bid it smoothly run.  
 Mature in years, to ready honours move,  
 O, of celestial seed ! O foster son of Jove !



See, lab'ring Nature calls thee to sustain  
The nodding frame of heaven, and earth and main :  
See, to their base restor'd, earth, seas, and air,  
And joyful ages from behind, in crowding ranks appear."

This poem proves, not only the expectation which at that time prevailed of the great King who was to arise, but ascribes to the subject of it the precise features of the Messiah's reign, as delineated by the Jewish prophets, which is to produce its full effects on the world, not at the beginning, but after a certain period.

Virgil could not have been ignorant of the existence of the Jewish Scriptures; nor is it to be imagined that their poetic beauties could have failed to attract his attention, when it is considered that the whole poetry of Greece was ransacked by him for imitation. And whoever will compare the 2d, 9th, 11th, and 65th chapters of Isaiah with this fourth Eclogue of Virgil, cannot doubt whether the same images, united in combinations opposite to the analogies of nature, applied to similar subjects, and by both writers, in the way of prediction, must not have ultimately originated in a common source. Instead of a son, the wife of Pollio was delivered of a daughter; but what was ignorantly applied by the poet, was, in less than forty years after, verified in the true Messiah.



Again, in his *Æneid*, Virgil refers to the expectation of this great King, when endeavouring to reconcile the Roman people to the late subversion of their republic, by insinuating, that the establishment of the house of Cæsar in the person of Augustus, and the consequent extension of their empire, were irrefragable proofs of his being the *universal Sovereign* so long promised, and the divine *offspring of Jupiter* himself.

“ Turn, turn thine eyes ! see here thy race divine ;  
Behold thy own imperial Roman line :  
Cæsars with all the Julian name survey ;  
See where the glorious ranks ascend to day !  
This—this is *he* ! the *chief so long foretold*,  
To bless the land where Saturn rul’d of old,  
And give the Latian realms a second *age of gold* !  
The promised prince, Augustus the divine,  
Of Cæsar’s race, and *Jove’s immortal line* !  
*This mighty chief his empire shall extend*  
*O’er Indian realms, to earth’s remotest end.*”

Besides the foregoing indubitable testimonies to the fact of the general expectation of a king who was to obtain universal empire, the reality of its existence is established by the most unexceptionable historical evidence. Josephus expressly assigns it as the principal cause of the Jews revolting against the Roman government, and of bringing on that war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem.



Tacitus, speaking of the time when Vespasian waged war with the Jews, says, that “a firm persuasion prevailed among a great many that it was contained in the ancient sacerdotal writings, that about this time it should come to pass that the East should prevail, and that those that should come out of Judea should obtain the empire of the world.”

Suetonius, speaking of the same time, says, “there had prevailed, all over the East, an ancient and constant opinion, that it was in the fates that at that time there should come out of Judea those who should obtain the empire of the world.”

Thus the fact of the *general* expectation of the world at the time of Christ's appearance, of the coming of a great King, that it was *uniform*, that it was *ancient*, that it was founded on what was believed to be the decree of heaven, and contained in the sacerdotal writings, that he who should appear was to come out of Judea, and that he was to obtain the empire of the world, is established beyond all doubt. This is a point of much importance among the testimonies to the Messiah. It explains the cause of Herod's alarm when he sent and slew the children at Bethlehem, and shews the strong reason which incited him to that



violent and atrocious deed. It also furnishes the reason of the Emperor Domitian's summoning before him the relations of Jesus Christ, as we shall afterwards see, to inquire if they laid claim to empire. And it proves invincibly, that the predictions which had been given concerning the Messiah were sufficiently clear and precise to attain the object that was designed by them. While it for ever confutes the opinion entertained by many, who, entirely unacquainted with the subject, and hearing it may be of some hasty and ill-founded applications of the prophecies, have rashly concluded, that the predictions in the Scriptures are completely obscure and unintelligible.



## CHAP. II.

*Appearance of the Messiah.*

ACCORDING to the prophecies, and just at the time foretold, Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, then reduced to low circumstances. He was called Jesus, the Greek of the Hebrew name Joshua, which last is compounded of two words, and signifies "Jehovah that Saveth." The title Christ, that is, Messiah, or Anointed, being so often added in designation of his office, at length came into use as a part of his name. His birth was announced to Herod king of Judea, by strangers from the East. They had received a divine intimation concerning him, and now came to inquire where He was to be found, in order that they might worship him who was born King of the Jews. Herod being alarmed, assembled the chief priests and scribes,



and demanded where the Messiah should be born. They quoted the prophecy on this subject, which distinctly declared that Bethlehem was the place. Herod directed the strangers to go there, to seek diligently for the young child, and when they had found him, to return and let him know, pretending that he also wished to do him homage. The men, directed of God, found the young child. They fell down and worshipped him, and presented their gifts; but being warned in a dream, they returned by another way to their own country, and saw Herod no more. The mother of Jesus and her husband having also received warning, fled with the child to Egypt. Herod, greatly enraged and disappointed that the strangers from the East did not return as he expected, sent and slew all the children at Bethlehem and its vicinity who were under two years old.

Except his appearance in the Temple at twelve years of age, and his residing with his parents, and being subject to them, little more is recorded concerning Jesus, till when about 30 years of age, his forerunner, as had been predicted, announced him to the Jews.

The Old Testament Scriptures had been completed about 420 years before the Christian era, which is dated four years after the birth of



the Messiah. \* During the intervening period, the spirit of prophecy was withdrawn from the Jews. At length a man bearing the aspect of their ancient prophets, appeared in the wilderness of Judea. "He had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey." There he lifted up his "voice," and proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand. The time of this appearance of John the Baptist is fixed by Luke in the most precise manner: Luke iii. 1, 2, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness."

Owing to the general expectation of the Messiah which then prevailed, the Jews were attracted in multitudes to the ministry of John. The rulers also sent priests and Levites to enquire

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\* The Christian era was intended to be reckoned from the birth of Christ; but owing to a mistake when it was brought into use in the sixth century, it commences four years posterior to that event.



who he was. He answered that he was not the Messiah, but "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Isaiah." In the most solemn manner he warned all who came to him to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and to trust no longer to their descent from Abraham. To those who enquired, he gave particular directions for their conduct, corresponding to the spirit of the new dispensation which was about to be introduced. Multitudes were baptized by him, confessing their sins. He informed them that he baptized with water, but there was one to come after him whose shoes latchet he was not worthy to loose, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Jesus Christ now came forward and desired to be baptized. "But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me. Jesus answering, said unto him, suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him; and Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved



Son, in whom I am well pleased." John testified of him, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."—"I saw," said he, "and bare record that this is the Son of God."

The end of the mission of John the Baptist was now attained. According to the predictions of the Prophets concerning him, he had prepared the way for the Messiah, by proclaiming in the wilderness that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and had pointed him out "as the Messenger of the covenant." Another part of those prophecies respecting John was now to be fulfilled. The transient nature of his service had been intimated, by representing it as "a voice," which is no sooner uttered than it is gone. He was seized by Herod, bound, and put in prison, having reproved him for taking Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, and was soon afterwards beheaded.

Before his death, upon hearing of the works of Christ, and that he had sent out twelve of his disciples to proclaim the approach of his kingdom, John appears to have been dissatisfied, that he who had so boldly and successfully testified of him should be set aside, while others were employed in his service. Although he had seen the Spirit of God descending on Je-



sus Christ, and had heard a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son," he sent to him two of his disciples, with the following message: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" "Jesus answered, and said unto them, Go and shew John again these things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." The facts to which Jesus thus referred in his answer to John, were the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah; they also demonstrated that the power of God resided in him who performed them; while they verified the description the prophets had given of his reign, which was to be distinguished for condescension, sympathy, and gracious compassion. Messiah was "to bind up the broken hearted, and to comfort all that mourn." He was also anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor. "The poor among men," said the Prophet, "shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." These things were sufficient for the satisfaction of John; and as the message he had sent conveyed an indirect imputation of blame for neglecting him, Jesus answered it in the same manner by



an indirect reproof. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Thus John was warned to be on his guard, and to recollect his superior authority, as that Messiah concerning whom he had testified, who had a right to dispose of his servants as he thought fit.

The early removal of John from his public service, and the employing him no more in it, while it was a fulfilment of the prophecies concerning him, cut off every appearance of previous concert. His being treated, too, in this manner, and still continuing to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, more strikingly confirmed his former testimony, than if, being appointed one of his Apostles, he had been honoured by the notice and confidence of the Lord, in an active and official situation. It likewise gave a practical lesson, at the very beginning of their service, of what Jesus Christ so often inculcated on his disciples concerning what they were to expect in his service in this world.

After the departure of John's messengers, Jesus gave him a most honourable testimony; and declared, that, as being that messenger who had prepared the way before him, John was more than a prophet, "Verily I say unto you, among



those that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." John was more highly honoured than any who had gone before him, in as much as he was more immediately employed in preparing the way of Jesus Christ, and as he actually pointed him out personally as the Messiah. Still, like the ancient prophets who searched what the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, John could only darkly contemplate what was yet unfulfilled. But the least disciple of Jesus, after his resurrection, since his kingdom has been set up, has a clearer understanding, and is able to give a fuller testimony concerning the character, the work, the life, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension to glory of the Son of God, and the nature and progress of his kingdom, than John could do; "Blessed are the eyes," said Jesus to his disciples, "which see the things which ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see these things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them."



Jesus, when he entered upon his public ministry, began to proclaim, as his forerunner had done, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Of those who attached themselves to him he chose twelve, whom he denominated Apostles, and likewise seventy other disciples, whom he sent through Judea, to make the same proclamation, and to excite general attention. His kingdom was not set up till after his resurrection from the dead, which was the grand confirmation of his title as God's anointed.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus maintained a considerable degree of reserve in declaring his character. Unless he had done this, such was the inveteracy of his enemies, that, without constant miraculous interposition, his life could not have been preserved. But, owing to his acting in this manner, he was not seized on by the rulers, till "his hour (the appointed time of the consummation of his mission) was come." All along he had given sufficient intimation who he was. He that had ears to hear might hear. But towards the close of his ministry, he laid aside all reserve. In the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, he performed some of his most astonishing miracles ;—came openly forward as the Messiah ;—reproved and confuted the rulers who op-



posed him ;—rode publicly into Jerusalem, as had been foretold, and assumed authority in the temple as his Father's house. In consequence of this he was seized, and his followers dispersed ; while he himself was condemned by the Jewish rulers and the Roman government, and put to death.

Upon this occasion his disciples, who had very imperfectly comprehended his design, and the work in which they themselves had engaged, were struck with astonishment. But they declared that, on the third day after his death, he arose from the grave, appeared to them, and to about 500 more of his disciples, and during 40 days instructed them respecting his kingdom ; after which, in their presence, he ascended up to heaven. They affirmed that, before he departed, he gave them a commission to proclaim in all the world the good news of his resurrection, with those important considerations which it involved, commanding all men to believe and to obey the truth. And in proof of their commission, they publicly wrought miracles at the temple, and in the streets of Jerusalem.

Except the appearance of Jesus Christ after his resurrection, there are none of the great facts concerning him declared by the Apostles, the



truth of which rests on their testimony only, and that of the other disciples. All the others were transacted publicly before the world. In the midst of Jerusalem, and at the next Jewish feast after he suffered, the Apostles openly referred to this publicity. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, *as ye yourselves also know.*”

The public appearance of the Redeemer after his resurrection, did not comport with the design of his mission. During the whole of his ministry among them, the Jews had treated him with every insult. They had at last demanded a robber to be released in preference to him; had put him to death, and desired that his blood should be upon them and their children. God had spoken to them, and they had not heard, therefore they were left to walk in their own counsels; the day of vengeance was at hand, and wrath was about to overtake them to the uttermost.

After the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, the period of his humiliation was past. Before his death, although the prince of this world had nothing in him,—nothing on which he could fix



his temptations, and make them effectual, as he does in sinful men ; yet to give the world a proof of love to his Father, and, in obedience to his Father's command, Jesus had entered into a contest with Satan and his adherents. In this contest, his heel had been bruised. He had been despised, rejected, and persecuted, and was brought down to the dust of death. But, " through death, he had destroyed him that had the power of death. He had now bruised the serpent's head, and obtained a final victory over him and all his progeny. It was not then, it would seem, fit that the Son of God should afterwards appear amidst his enemies, as he had formerly done. This would have exposed him again to the same insults he had hitherto experienced. They who could resist the evidence of the miracles he had wrought in the Temple, in their presence, before his death—the extraordinary appearances that took place at his crucifixion—the indubitable information they had received of his resurrection—and afterwards the miracles which his Apostles performed, would not have been persuaded by seeing him after he rose from the grave.

That he would not again appear to them on earth, Jesus had distinctly informed the Jews, before his crucifixion : " Behold your house is



left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me." "They shall go," said the prophet Hosea, "with their flocks and herds, to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them." All that "was behind of the sufferings of Christ," was to be filled up by his disciples, and through them only he was henceforth to address the world.

Had the public appearance of the Messiah, after his death, been otherwise admissible, nothing, even on the ground of evidence, would have been gained, but rather the reverse. Many of the Jews had seen him but occasionally, others at a distance, or perhaps only when hanging upon the cross. This would have given rise to doubtful or contradictory testimony. Whereas now, we have the unanimous, unvarying evidence of a sufficient number of witnesses, who had long enjoyed familiar intercourse with him, and could not be mistaken as to his appearance. Besides this, these men (who died for maintaining the truth they asserted) publicly wrought miracles in his name, after his resurrection, in the midst of Jerusalem, which as fully stamped the credi-



bility of their testimony, as if Jesus himself had been visibly present.

“The scheme of redemption required, that before the passion the form of the servant should be predominant in the Redeemer’s appearance; that, after his resurrection, the form of God should be conspicuous. Accordingly, throughout his previous life, his manners were grave, but unreserved; serious, rather than severe; his deportment highly dignified, but unassuming; and the whole course and method of his life was unconcealed; and it appears to have been the life of a man in every circumstance. He had a home at Capernaum, where he lived with his mother and her family, except when the stated festivals called him to Jerusalem, or the business of his ministry induced him to visit other towns. When he travelled about the country to propagate his doctrine, and to heal them that were vexed with the devil, the evangelical history, for the most part, informs us whence he set out, and whither he went. In every circumstance of his life, before his passion, the blessed Jesus appears a mortal man. An example of virtue he indeed exhibited, which never other man attained. But the example was of human virtues, of piety, of temperance, of benevolence, and of whatever



in the life of man is laudable. Before his resurrection, it was in power only, and in knowledge, that he shewed himself divine.

“After his resurrection, the change is wonderful; insomuch that, except in certain actions which were done to give his disciples proof that they saw in him their crucified Lord arisen from the grave, he seems to have done nothing like a common man. He was repeatedly seen by them, but he lived not with them in familiar habits. His time for forty days preceding his ascension was not spent in their society. They knew not his goings out and coming in. The place of his abode for any single night is nowhere mentioned, nor from the most diligent examination of the story, is any place of his abode on earth to be assigned.

“Every appearance of our Lord to the Apostles after his resurrection, was in truth an appearance of the great God, the maker of heaven and earth, to mortal man. The conferences, though frequent, seem to have been short, and upon each occasion mixed with that condescension which was necessary to give the disciples sensible evidence of the reality of the resurrection. We discover much of a reserved dignity in his deportment, a tone of high authority prevails in his language,



and something profoundly mysterious in his actions. His familiar conversation with the world before his passion was a principal branch of his humiliation, and his humiliation was an essential part of those sufferings by which the guilt of man was expiated. But the atonement being once made, the form of a servant was to be removed, and Christ was to reassume his glory.

“Would you now ask, why Jesus, after his resurrection, was not rendered visible to all the people? Will you not rather stand aghast at the impiety of the question? Ask why God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Ask why he who conversed with Abraham as a man talketh with his friend, conversed not but in judgment with the vile inhabitants of Sodom? Ask why Moses only, of all the congregation, was allowed to enter the thick darkness where God was?”

The proof of the facts concerning Jesus Christ shall now be brought forward. The evidence on which they rest is not collected from one quarter only; it arises from various sources. It is collected from friends and from enemies, from Christians, from Jews, and from Heathens. It is established on the direct records and testimonies of the first, on the silence of the second, and



on the admissions, the historical notices, and the public edicts of the last. All the ancient authors, whether friends or enemies, who have mentioned the subject, unite in testifying that Christianity had its origin from Jesus Christ, at the time which the Scriptures assign, while they confirm the leading facts which they contain.



### CHAP. III.

#### *Testimony of the Apostles to the Messiah.*

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THE testimony of the Apostles to the Messiah is of the strongest and most unexceptionable kind. It is the evidence of eye-witnesses, who accompanied him during the whole of his public ministry. "That which we have heard," say they, "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life, declare we unto you." They attest facts in which, from their nature, they could not be deceived; and which, had they not existed, they had no conceivable interest to impose upon others, but in every respect the reverse.

The account that these men have given in their writings of the life of Jesus Christ, bears the strongest internal marks of truth. Nothing can be more remote from enthusiasm than the whole of their narratives. No raptures nor exta-



sies, no credulity nor self-conceit, no traces whatever of a heated imagination, not even a word that betrays passion of any kind, ever appears. All is sober, regular, and dignified.

In narrating a train of the most astonishing circumstances, where truth alone could preserve consistency, they are uniformly consistent with themselves and with each other.

Their candour and impartiality in whatever respects their own characters, is manifest beyond dispute. Without the smallest reserve, they relate a variety of particulars, that discover their prejudice, ignorance, and want of fortitude; and many things, respecting themselves, which other writers carefully gloss over or conceal. Every thing in their narrative bears the strongest mark of veracity; and the train of circumstances is so necessarily connected, that it is impossible to admit any one part without receiving the whole.

In giving the history of Jesus Christ, they have applied to him the types and prophecies of the Mosaic dispensation; and have successfully shewn that in him as “the end of the law,” the whole of the multiplied particulars of that singular institution, combined in one point, have a consist-



ent accomplishment. In delineating his character, they simply state facts—what he said, and what he did, without any encomiums or praise. We are thus presented with a living picture. We see Him in the most trying situations never one moment at a loss, never entangled nor baffled; but constantly exhibiting the same superiority and wisdom, the same purity and meekness, the same dignity and condescension, and uniformly pursuing the great object he had in view. In this way they have exhibited a perfect character, uniting every excellency, and carrying every virtue to the highest point, without the smallest defect or flaw. In performing this work, they confessedly stand alone. No writer besides, in all the indulgence of imagination, far less in describing from real life, has ever accomplished such a task.

To the accounts thus transmitted in their history, and which they promulgated in their discourses, they uniformly adhered, amidst the greatest opposition, trials, and difficulties; and most of them laid down their lives in attestation of what they advanced.

If any refuse to credit their testimony, they must do it on one or other of these grounds;—either that they were *deceived*, or *deceivers*. But whichever of these alternatives is chosen, it will



be found equally difficult to maintain it. If the first be resorted to, a little consideration will shew it was impossible. Men may be deluded in matters of theory, and bewildered by ingenious speculations; their imaginations may be inflamed by enthusiasm and opinions which they ardently wish to be true, they may at length be brought to believe. But this can never be the case in matters of fact, that are plain and obvious to the senses, that do not admit of deception or collusion, and which are continually repeated again and again for years. Such was the nature of the facts which they witnessed, and of the miracles which the Apostles declare they saw Jesus perform.

At length they saw their Lord put to death in the presence of multitudes. Afterwards they saw him again alive, with those marks on his body which his crucifixion had impressed. Of his resurrection he had given them several previous intimations, which, although they did not well comprehend at the time, being unable to reconcile them with the ideas they had formed of his character, they afterwards understood plainly. They saw him at last ascend to heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight.



Jesus had promised to bestow upon them, after his departure, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. These accordingly, they inform us, they received, and, in consequence, were themselves enabled to work miracles. The sick were brought to them from all quarters, and they healed all who applied. In thus performing miracles themselves, it is impossible they could be deceived. But one miraculous gift, above all they possessed, in which the most determined incredulous cannot suppose there could be any self-deception ;—they were enabled to speak a number of foreign languages, and intelligibly to address people from different countries in tongues which they were conscious they had never learned, nor had possessed any means of acquiring. Could they be deceived in this? The absurdity of the supposition is manifest. Never, then, was any thing more certain in this world, than that these men were *not deceived*.

To the second alternative, that the Apostles deceived others, every known principle that actuates human nature stands directly opposed. From the first they had been warned of the difficulties that lay before them in the work in which they engaged, and of the treatment they were likely to meet with. And of this they had



seen an early example in the case of John the Baptist. But whatever expectation of a worldly kingdom they might, like the other Jews, entertain before his death, the crucifixion of their Master must for ever have put an end to all such hopes. They saw him expire, in apparent weakness, amidst circumstances of the greatest distress on his part, and of triumph on that of his persecutors. They had then an opportunity, if they chose, to return to their own homes and occupations, which they had given up for his service. In doing this, they ran no risk of being molested by the Jewish governors, who appear at that time to have considered them too contemptible to notice them at all. But not one of them departed. Though far from being credulous, as appears in the case of Thomas, and from other circumstances, all on that trying occasion stood firm. So far from being shaken by what they then saw, we find them, in a short time afterwards, coming forward in a new character, without any of their former timidity or ignorance; but, on the contrary, with the greatest boldness, and the most complete information on the subject of their mission. Nothing can account for this extraordinary change, but the instructions which, subsequently to his



resurrection, they declare they received from their Lord, and the inspiration, as had been promised, of the Holy Ghost.

Before the crucifixion of Jesus, Peter, the most forward among the Apostles, trusting to his own strength, declared, that though all men should forsake him, yet he would not. Jesus, who knew the weakness of man, and also the power and malignity of Satan, who at this time desired to have Peter, that "he might sift him as wheat," informed him, that before the cock should crow, he would deny him thrice. But, after his resurrection, having then taken upon himself the matter of Peter's adherence to his cause, which, by his divine influence, he would now secure, he intimated to him, that, so far from denying him, Peter would lay down his life in his cause. "When thou wast young," said he, "thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."

Such were the prospects as to this world held out to the Apostles, both by the fact of their



Master's crucifixion, and by his declarations to them; yet they persevered; and they were so far from considering his crucifixion any reproach, or any reason for relinquishing his service, that this was the subject in which they gloried most. "God forbid," says Paul, who had forsaken much for the cause of Jesus, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world." This is that same Apostle who, not insensible to the painful trials to which his situation as a follower of Jesus Christ exposed him, says, in another place, "I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.—If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

The only apparent worldly motive that could be supposed to influence the Apostles, was that authority among the disciples with which they were to be invested. Of pre-eminence at first they were like others desirous, and were on different occasions sharply reprehended on this point. But after they were better instructed, they uniformly disclaimed among those who attached themselves to them the exercise of any superiority which



could yield them sinful gratification. The whole honour and power they in the most unqualified manner ascribed to their Master, as all their writings evince ; and they uniformly inculcated upon others the necessity of doing the same. The doctrine they taught, essentially led to this, and every part of it brought them back to what they had received from the Lord. “ Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”

But, besides all other considerations, the character of the religion they promulgated, stood awfully opposed to every idea of deception. The view they exhibited of the holiness of God, of his infinite abhorrence of sin, and of those tremendous sanctions by which his authority is guarded, was carried by them to the utmost height. Having deliberately forsaken every prospect of ease in this world, and every expectation from the religion in which they had been brought up, was it in human nature to resort to a system which, while they relinquished every other hope, condemned them without remedy, if, on any pretence, they continued to be guilty of habitual deception? The idea of doing evil that good may come, they have stigmatized in the severest terms. Of persons who maintain this principle, they declare, that



their "*damnation is just*,"—"knowing," say they, "the *terror* of the Lord, we persuade men." The supposition, then, that while, at the expence of their blood, they taught and exemplified so holy a religion, they were wilfully and deliberately practising deception, is as incompatible with the known principles of human nature, as it is to choose pain for its own sake in preference to pleasure. But supposing this possible in an individual, could a number of men at one time be found to do so? And if they commence the work, shall they all persevere in it? Will each one act his part faithfully and uniformly, till a violent death removes him from his painful situation? Shall there be no struggling for pre-eminence? No quarrelling, no separating among them, which might conduce to the overthrow of the common cause? Some of them did quarrel and separate; but so far was this from leading to any detection of hidden evil, as it infallibly would have done had any deception existed, each continued to go on his own way, endeavouring, by every means in his power, to promote that work in which he had been previously engaged.

Still if there be any deception and imposture in the case, shall not one at least be found who, actuated by the powerful, nay, irresistible, mo-



tive of profitably freeing himself from trouble and disgrace, guilt and death, and of recommending himself to the favour of men in power, shall break the combination, and reveal the imposture? One of the Apostles did indeed prove a traitor. Judas had accompanied Jesus from the beginning, and had been admitted to the same opportunities of observation as all the others. If, then, any plot was known to the rest, he was acquainted with it. If any underhand combination existed, he was privy to it. He then at least would have discovered every thing. For a bribe he betrayed his Master. What, then, did he disclose? When he saw the effect of his treachery, in the condemnation of Jesus, struck with insufferable remorse, he cast away the bribe, exclaimed, "*I have betrayed the innocent blood,*" and went and hanged himself.

On the other hand, Paul of Tarsus, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and encouraged by men in power on account of the active part he took in the persecution of the disciples, while bearing a commission of authority against them, he at once became a most zealous supporter of that cause which he had laboured to destroy. In the situation of favour in which he stood, and fully acquainted with the distressed cir-



cumstances of those whom he was persecuting to death, nothing can account for this sudden, complete, and lasting change, but what he declared actually happened, his seeing Jesus by the way. The uniform allegiance he afterwards yielded to him, the zeal he displayed, and the sufferings, even unto death, which he endured in his service, sufficiently attest the full conviction he entertained of the truth of that religion which he had once so violently opposed. Several of his epistles to his Christian brethren are written from prison, and he styles himself “a prisoner of Jesus Christ,”—“for whom,” says he, “I have suffered the loss of all things.” Finding fault with the church at Corinth, he says, “We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place. And labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat. We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.” In the second Epistle



to the same church, when cautioning them against false teachers, he says, "Are they ministers of Christ, (I speak as a fool), I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." This is the man who once "exceedingly mad" against the disciples of Jesus, basked in the sunshine of the favour of those in power; but who now "preached the faith which once he destroyed." For so great a change at so great an expence, *there must have been an adequate cause.* Such sufferings as are above described, Paul and his fellow Apostles endured in that service in which at last they laid down their lives. From these considerations, we



have positive certainty, that the Apostles were *not deceivers of others*.

On no supposition whatever, can *deception* have place in this matter. Every man of common intelligence *knows* it to be *impossible* for twelve men to maintain consistency in falsehood respecting a matter involving a great variety of circumstances, while they are separated, watched, and placed in such situations as inevitably to throw them at one time or other off their guard.

“If any human testimony ever attained the certainty of demonstration, it is in this instance of our Lord’s resurrection, which is established with far greater certainty by the evidence of the Apostles, than any other fact in the whole compass of history, sacred or profane. The credibility of evidence in all cases arises from the number, the information, and the veracity of the witnesses. The number of the witnesses in the present case, if we reckon only the eleven Apostles, (and many more might be reckoned), was far greater than has ever been deemed sufficient to establish a fact in a court of justice, in the most intricate and weighty causes. Their information upon the general point in question, “that our Lord was seen alive after his crucifixion,” was the most complete that can be imagined. They



could not be mistaken in his person, who had so long and so constantly attended him. The veracity of a witness is to be measured, not simply by the probity of his disposition and his habits of sincerity, but by the motives which circumstances may present to him, to adhere to the truth or to deviate from it. No man loves falsehood for its own sake. No man, therefore, deliberately propagates a lie, but for the sake of some advantage to himself; and the advantage which a man pursues by falsehood, must always be something in the present world: his ease and security, or the advancement of his fortune: For no one who looks forward to a future state, thinks that his interest there may be served by falsehood. It always, therefore, heightens the credit of a witness, if he is materially a sufferer by the testimony which he gives, when he could not suffer either in fortune, ease, or reputation, by a contrary testimony.

“It is a very singular circumstance in this testimony, that it is such as no length of time can diminish. It is founded upon the universal principles of human nature; upon maxims which are the same in all ages, and operate with equal strength in all mankind, under all the varieties of temper and habit of constitution. So long as it



shall be contrary to the first principles of the human mind to delight in falsehood for its own sake; so long as it shall be true that no man willingly propagates a lie to his own detriment, and to no purpose,—so long it will be certain that the Apostles were serious and sincere in the assertion of our Lord's resurrection. So long as it shall be absurd to suppose that twelve men could all be deceived in the person of a friend with whom they had lived three years,—so long it will be certain that the Apostles were competent to judge of the truth and reality of the fact which they asserted. So long as it shall be in the nature of man, for his own interest and ease, to be dearer than that of another to himself,—so long it will be an absurdity to suppose that twelve men should persevere for years in the joint attestation of a lie, to the great detriment of every individual of the conspiracy, and without any joint or separate advantage, when any one of them had it in his power, by a discovery of the fraud, to advance his own fame and fortune, by the sacrifice of nothing more dear to him than the reputation of the rest; and so long will it be incredible that the story of our Lord's resurrection was a fiction, which the twelve men, (to mention no greater number,) with unparalleled fortitude,



and with equal folly, conspired to support. So long, therefore, as the Evangelical history shall be preserved entire, that is, so long as the historical books of the New Testament shall be extant in the world, so long the credibility of the Apostles' testimony will remain whole and unimpaired. As this circumstance to have in itself the principle of permanency never happened to human testimony in any other instance, this preservation of the form and integrity of the Apostolical evidence, amidst all the storms and wrecks which human science, like all things human, hath, in the course of ages undergone, is, like the preservation of the Jewish nation, something of a standing miracle. It shews in the original propagation of the Gospel, that contrivance and forecast in the plan, that power in the execution, which are far beyond the natural abilities of the human mind, and declares that the whole work and counsel was of God."

Before concluding this view of the Apostolic testimony, the case of Judas must be reverted to. Judas had been placed by the Lord, from the beginning of his ministry, among the Apostles. Thus Jesus admitted one, from the first, to be a constant witness and a spy on his conduct. As Judas betrayed his Master, it is evident that, if



he could have brought home any thing to his disadvantage, he would have done it in his own vindication. He would have appeared against him, when, at his trial before the chief priests and elders, they were at such a loss to prove that Jesus was a deceiver. But not a word derogatory to his character does he utter, although he had been so long with him.

The greatest enemy, with a choice of means for detection of fraud or collusion, could not have pointed out any thing better calculated to suit his purpose, than the placing of Judas among the Apostles. It was a remarkable provision made by the Lord, for increasing, to the highest point, the value of the testimony of the twelve Apostles. It was like the water which Elijah commanded to be poured around the altar, before the fire descended from heaven to consume the sacrifice. Judas also, as the other Apostles, although in a different way, has sealed his testimony with his blood.



## CHAP. IV.

*Testimony of the First Christians to the Messiah.*

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IN addition to the testimony of the Apostles to the truth of the Gospel, we have the corroborating evidence of the first Christians. The testimony of many of these is of the same nature with that of the Apostles. It is the evidence of men who did not receive on tradition what they believed, but were eye-witnesses of its truth. This was more particularly the case respecting the numerous body of disciples at Jerusalem; but it was not confined to them. The Lord Jesus Christ not only conferred on the Apostles the power of working miracles, in attestation of his divine mission, but also of imparting miraculous gifts to the other disciples, by the laying on of their hands. John, who survived all the other Apostles, lived to about the year 101. If persons of 20 years of age received these gifts by the laying on of his hands, and lived, as some



of them in common course must have done, till 70 years of age, this would carry us down to the year 150: And if others of 20 years of age saw them in possession of these gifts, and in their turn survived till they were 70, this will bring us to about the year 200; but as that may be considered nearly the utmost limit, the general period of the cessation of the miraculous powers may be reckoned about the year 150. In this way, from the time of the ascension of Christ, we have a period of above 100 years during which miraculous gifts existed in those churches which the Apostles had gathered or visited. Here, then, the testimony adduced is that of men who witnessed, and many of whom possessed, miraculous powers; so that they had the evidence of their senses to the truth of the Christian religion. Many of them, like the Apostles, laid down their lives for that truth, and all of them stood the brunt of the fiercest persecution.

By the Book of Acts, published in the same age in which the transactions it records took place, we are informed, that when the Apostles, at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, began openly to publish at Jerusalem that he was the Messiah, every



effort was used to repress them, and all Jerusalem was greatly agitated. The Apostles wrought many miracles, and the success of their doctrine was very considerable. About three thousand persons immediately joined themselves to them, and were baptized. Soon afterwards, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

One of the disciples who had been chosen to an office in the church, was now publicly put to death, and a general persecution was raised, by which the rest of the disciples, except the Apostles, were scattered from Jerusalem. This, however, so far from suppressing, proved the means of propagating far and near the doctrine of Jesus; and, within a few years after his death, there were numerous bodies of Christians collected in most of the principal cities of the Roman empire. That these societies thus existed in the Apostolic age, and that they had been collected and were regulated by the doctrine which the Apostles taught, is a fact beyond the reach of controversy.

Owing to the manner in which the New Testament Scriptures were at first made public, as has been already detailed, the testimony given



by the first Christians to the truth of their contents is placed in the strongest light. For nothing can stamp such a character of certainty on writings, as being directed to, and acknowledged by persons, who themselves have been witnesses of the transactions that are appealed to, and which are so interwoven with the facts they are called to believe, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. The facts recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles form the basis of all that the Epistles to the churches contain.

These Epistles are addressed to the churches on particular occasions, conveying, as was necessary, exhortation, instruction, reproof, or consolation. They enter into a detail of errors into which they had fallen, of faults they had committed, and of various particulars in their conduct. Individuals in them are spoken of by name, sometimes to their honour, and at other times with disapprobation. The writer frequently refers to their immediate situation, and to his own conduct and circumstances while with them. Sometimes he is compelled to remind them of the treatment he had experienced, and of his own upright and disinterested behaviour, without any temporal re-



muneration. They are appealed to as eye-witnesses of the miracles he performed, and of the miraculous gifts bestowed upon some among themselves. Could societies of men be deceived in regard to these things? Could they be imposed on by being called as witnesses of what they never saw, or as being subjects of trials and sufferings they had never felt? Would they bear to be reprehended for faults they had never committed; to be admonished as to errors into which they had never fallen? The supposition is absurd; and the very nature of the Epistles to the first churches carries at once irrefragable evidence of the integrity of those who wrote them, and of the competency of the persons to whom they were addressed to judge of the truth of their contents.

For the sincerity of the persons who thus received and acknowledged these Epistles, we have the most unequivocal pledges that human nature can give. All of them, in consequence of adopting the truths which these writings contain, had changed their several religions in which they had been brought up, had renounced their former habits and modes of living, and had incurred the risk of the loss of life, property, and every thing dear in society. Many of them had already



taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and all of them had, in one way or other, become "partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel." When men thus renounce their strongest prejudices, and act in opposition to their best immediate interests, they will carefully examine the grounds on which they are proceeding.

One thing more may be added, which, affording the strongest corroborating evidence, precludes all possibility of collusion. From the beginning, divisions obtained in the churches. In the First Epistle of Paul to the church at Corinth, he tells them he had been informed there were contentions among them, and that every one of them said, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ, and he charges them with envying and strife. In this situation, when all were watching each other, no reproofs or instructions would be submitted to, without the strictest examination, while the integrity of the writings they received would be guarded in the most vigilant manner. Various sects also soon sprang up, who separated from the first churches, but who received as Divine truth the same writings with the others, to which, in their disputes, they all appealed. It gives a melancholy view of human na-



ture, that such divisions, in almost endless variety, have continued to the present day. But nothing can be imagined that would be equally efficacious in stamping the character of truth on facts, which all had a full opportunity, as well as the deepest interest to ascertain, and which, both in their agreements and in their discords, they all unanimously attest.

But especially the 3000 disciples, who first joined themselves to the Apostles in Jerusalem, in the face of the opposition that was then raised, are witnesses entitled to the fullest credit. Peter, in his first address, charges them with having taken the Lord Jesus, and with wicked hands crucified and slain him. From what they afterwards heard and saw, they were convinced of their guilt, and became themselves the disciples of Christ. They were eye witnesses of the miracles which the Apostles performed “in the temple,” and in “the streets” of Jerusalem, where multitudes of sick people, brought from the neighbouring country, were publicly healed. Soon after, on account of their adherence to the faith, “a great persecution” was raised against them, and “Paul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison.” They were in con-



sequence obliged to flee from Jerusalem. These persons living at the very source of information, both as to time and place, who did not receive the matter on hearsay, but whose senses were appealed to all along, and who gave such pledges of their conviction and sincerity, must be allowed to be credible witnesses.

But not only did the first disciples at Jerusalem suffer persecution, it was also the lot of all the first churches as soon as they were collected. The persecutions and afflictive trials they endured, both from the Jews and Heathens, are frequently and pointedly appealed to in those Epistles, which were written to them by the Apostles. "To you," says Paul to the Christians at Philippi, "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." "Ye brethren," says the same Apostle to the believers at Thessalonica, "become followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus, for ye also suffered like things of *your own countrymen*, even as they have of the *Jews*." "Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." "We ourselves glory in you, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure,



which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom for which ye also suffer." To the Hebrews he says, " Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Could we have stronger pledges of the sincerity of these persons among whom the Apostles laboured, whose miraculous powers they witnessed, which are appealed to in the same Epistles, and which were of such a nature that men could not be mistaken in them. These Epistles, too, were publicly read in the churches, every first day of the week; so that the facts they contained were submitted to the examination of enemies as well as of friends. We receive then from these first churches in the principal cities of the Roman empire, their testimony to those facts on which Christianity is founded, delivered in the presence of their enemies, and at the price of their own blood.



The following accounts of the death of Polycarp at Smyrna, and of the persecution of the churches at Lyons and Vienne in France, will afford a specimen of what Christians, in the next age, had to encounter in adhering to their religion. Polycarp, it will be recollected, was one of the Christian writers who were contemporaries with the Apostles, who was himself acquainted with the Apostle John, and had conversed with many who had seen Christ. He suffered death for the Christian religion in the year 167 or 168, in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, the philosopher, in what is called the fourth persecution.

Some time after the death of Polycarp, the Christians at Smyrna sent an account of it in a letter, from which the following is an extract, to the Christians at Philadelphia, Philomelium, and other places, who had expressed a desire to have it from eye-witnesses. “The church of God which is at Smyrna, to the church at Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the holy universal church in every place, the mercy, and peace, and love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied. We have written to you, brethren, concerning those who have suffered martyrdom, and particularly concerning the bles-



sed Polycarp, who, by his martyrdom, as it were, sealed up, and put an end to the persecution." After which, says Eusebius, "before they speak of Polycarp, they relate the sufferings of the other martyrs, describing their constancy under the torments which they endured; and how all who stood round them were astonished, seeing them scourged till their veins and arteries were laid bare, and even their entrails became visible; after which they were laid upon the shells of sea-fish, and upon sharp spikes fixed in the ground, with many other kinds of torture: In the end, they were cast to the wild beasts, to be devoured by them. They are particular in the account of the generous Germanicus, who being corroborated by the divine grace, overcame the fear of death implanted in the nature of men. For when the proconsul advised him to think of his youth, and to spare himself, and not throw away his life in his flourishing age; he was not at all moved thereby, but, as they say, he enticed and stimulated the wild beasts to approach him, that he might be the sooner dismissed from this evil world. Presently after that glorious exit, the whole multitude cried out, "Away with the impious; let Polycarp be sought for." There following then a great noise and tumult, and having



in view the wild beasts, and other tortures, Quintus, a Phrygian, was intimidated and give way, as did also some others with him, who, without a truly religious fear, had rashly presented themselves before the tribunal.

“ When the admirable Polycarp heard of the demand made for him, he was not at all disturbed, but continued to be in a firm and composed temper of mind ; and he resolved to stay in the city. Nevertheless, at length, he so far complied with the request of his friends, as to retire to a country house not far off, where he abode with a small company, spending the time, night and day, in continual prayer to God, offering up supplications for the peace of the churches throughout the world, which, indeed, was his constant usage.—In a short time, his pursuers, by informations given them, were led to the place where Polycarp was. Coming thither in the evening, they found him resting in an upper room, whence it was not difficult for him to remove to another house ; but he would not, saying “ the will of the Lord be done.” He then went down to the men, and talked to them in a free and cheerful manner, and ordered meat to be set before them, begging that they would allow him the space of one hour, in which he might pray without disturbance. Prayer being



ended, they set him upon an ass, to carry him into the city. As they were going, he was met by Herod the Irenarch, and his father Nicetas, who took him up into their chariot. As they sat together, they endeavoured to persuade him, saying, "What harm is it to say Lord Cæsar, and to sacrifice, and so to be safe?" At first, he made no answer; but when they were importunate, he said, "I will never do what you advise." They then began to reproach him, and they thrust him out of the chariot so hastily, that, in getting down, his leg was bruised; but he got up, and went on cheerfully, as if he had suffered no harm, till he came to the stadium.

"When he was brought before the tribunal, there was a great shout of the multitude. As he came near, the proconsul asked him if he was Polycarp. Upon his confessing that he was, he endeavoured to persuade him to deny Christ; and saying, "Reverence thy age," and other like things customary with them; "Swear by the fortune of Cæsar—repent—say, Away with the impious." The governor still urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will dismiss thee; reproach Christ." Polycarp then answered: "Fourscore and six years have I served him, and he has never done me any injury: How can I blaspheme my King and my



Saviour?" The governor was still urgent, saying, "Swear by the fortune of Cæsar." Whereupon Polycarp answered, "How can you desire this of me, as if you did not know who I am. Here me then openly professing I am a Christian. And if you have a mind to know the doctrine of Christianity, appoint me a day and I will inform you." The proconsul said, "I have wild beasts, and I will cast you to them, unless you change your mind." But he answered, "Call for them, there can be no alteration from good to bad, but it is good to change from vice to virtue." He said again to him, "Since you do not mind the beasts, I will order you to be consumed by fire unless you repent." Polycarp said, "You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and then is extinguished; but you are ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and everlasting punishment reserved for the wicked. But why do you delay? Appoint which you please."

The proconsul then sent the crier to make proclamation thrice in the midst of the stadium, "Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian." That proclamation having been made by the crier, the whole multitude of the Gentiles and Jews inhabiting Smyrna, with furious rage, and in a loud voice, cried out, "This is the



teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teacheth all men not to sacrifice nor to worship them." Having uttered these words, they cried out, and requested Philip the Asiarch to let out a lion upon Polycarp. He said he could not do that, because the amphitheatrical shows of wild beasts were over. Then they cried out, with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive; which was no sooner said than done; all immediately joining together in bringing wood, and dried branches of trees, from the shops and the baths. The Jews, also, according to their custom, assisting with the greatest forwardness.

"Now all things being prepared and put in order for the pile, when they were about to nail him to the stake, he said, "Let me be as I am. He that enables me to bear the fire, will enable me also to remain unmoved within the pile, without your fastening me with nails." They therefore did not nail him, but only bound him. He then offered up a prayer to God, which he concluded, saying aloud, Amen. Then the officers who had the charge of it kindled the fire. But Polycarp's body not being so soon consumed as expected, the people desired that the executioner should be called for, and run him through with a sword.



The faithful were now very desirous to have his body delivered to them; but some there were who moved Nicetas, father to Herod, to go to the governor to prevent his giving the body to the believers, lest, as they said, they should leave him that was crucified to worship this man. This they said at the suggestion of the Jews, who also diligently watched us that we might not carry off the body; little considering that we can never forsake Christ, who has suffered for the salvation of all men. Him we worship as the Son of God. The martyrs we love as the disciples and imitators of the Lord. The centurion, therefore, perceiving the perverseness of the Jews, caused the body to be brought forth, and burnt it. We then gathered up his bones, and deposited them in a proper place."

The persecution of the churches at Lyons and Vienne took place also under Marcus Antoninus in the year 177. "It was the seventeenth year," says Eusebius, "of the Emperor Antoninus, in which time the persecution against us raged with great violence in several parts of the world, through the enmity of the people in the cities. What vast multitudes of martyrs there were throughout the whole empire, may be concluded from what happened in one nation, which also



have been committed to writing, that they may be delivered to others, and may be always remembered. The whole history of these things has been inserted in our work of the collection of martyrs, of which I here select a part.

“ The country in which those things happened, of which I am now to speak, is Gaul, in which are two great and famous cities, Lyons and Vienne, both washed by the river Rhone, which traverseth that country with a rapid stream. These famous churches sent in writing an account of their martyrs to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. I shall insert their own words: ‘ The servants of Jesus Christ dwelling in Vienne and Lyons, to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, who have the same faith and hope of redemption with us, peace, and grace, and glory from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.’ After a few things said in the way of preface, they begin the narrative in these words: ‘ The greatness of the affliction in these places, and the excessive rage of the people against the saints, and what the blessed martyrs have endured, we are not able to describe in words, nor put down in writing; for the enemy at the very first invaded us with the greatest violence, shewing from the beginning what sore evils we were to expect.



Every thing was done to exercise his ministers, and to train them to the practice of the utmost cruelty against the servants of God. We were not only excluded from houses, (of friends, as it seems,) 'and from the baths and markets, but we were forbidden to appear in any place whatever. However, the grace of God fought for us against the enemy; delivering such as were weak, and setting up the pillars, which were firm and stable, and able, by their patience and fortitude, to withstand all the force of the enemy. They therefore came to a near combat with him, undergoing all manner of reproach and suffering. Accounting the greatest afflictions to be small, they hastened to Christ; thus shewing, in fact, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, Rom. viii. 18. First then, they courageously endured the insults of the multitude gathered together about them in crowds, their shouts and blows, and draggings about, pillaging their goods, throwing of stones, confinement to their dwellings, and all such things as an enraged multitude is wont to practise against adversaries and enemies. Then, being brought into the market by the tribune and the chief magistrates of the city, they were



examined before all the people ; and, having made their confession, they were shut up in prison till the arrival of the president.

“ Afterwards, when they were brought before the president, who exercised all manner of cruelty against us, Vetius Epagathus, one of the brethren, full of love towards God and his neighbour, whose course of life also was so perfect, that, though a young man, he might deserve the character of old Zacharias, Luke i. 6, that he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, and was unwearied in the performance of all good offices to his neighbour, being full of zeal for God, and fervent in spirit, Rom. xii. 11 ; he being such an one, was not able to bear these so unjust proceedings against us ; but being moved with indignation, requested that he might be allowed to make a defence in behalf of the brethren, and shew that nothing impious and irreligious was done by us. But they who were near the tribunal cried out against him, (for he was a person well known,) and the president refused to grant his request, though so reasonable, and asked him whether he was a Christian. He, answering with a loud voice that he was a Christian, was put into the number of the martyrs, and was called the advocate of the Christians. And indeed



he had within him the Advocate, the Holy Ghost, in a greater measure than Zacharias, Luke i. 67, which he also shewed by the abundance of his love, being willing to lay down his own life in defence of the brethren, 1 John iii. 16. For he was and is a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Rev. xiv. 4.

“ After this, others were chosen out, and they proved to be illustrious and well-prepared proto-martyrs, who, with all alacrity of mind, accomplished the solemn confession of martyrdom. They also were manifest who were unprepared, and unexercised, and still weak, and not able to bear the shock of so great a combat, of whom about ten in number fell away, causing in us great grief, and unmeasurable concern, and damping the alacrity of those who were not yet apprehended; of whom, however, it must be acknowledged, that they kepted company with the martyrs, and did not forsake them, though they suffered considerably in so doing. At that time we were all in great consternation, being uncertain about the event of this confession; not dreading the torments that might be inflicted upon us, but apprehensive of the issue, and that some might fall in the trial. However, from day to day, such were taken up as were worthy to supply the num-



ber of such as had gone off, so that the most eminent men of the two churches, and by whom good order had been settled among us, were picked out and brought together. Moreover, some Gentile servants of our people were apprehended. For the governor had given public orders for making strict inquiries after us. They, at the instigation of Satan, and dreading the torments which they saw the saints suffer, the soldiers also exciting them to it, falsely charged us with having the suppers of Thyestes, and the incestuous mixtures of Oedipus, and other such like things, which it is not lawful for us to mention nor to think of, nor to believe that they were ever done among men. These stories being spread abroad, all men were incensed against us; insomuch that if any there were who before had been civil to us upon account of affinity or friendship, they were then much offended, and exclaimed against us. And then was fulfilled what the Lord had said, John xvi. 2, 'That the time would come when every one who killeth you will think that he doth God service.'

"After that the holy martyrs underwent such torments as are above all description, Satan doing his utmost to make them also to say such impious things," (or to confess what had been declared



by the heathen servants), “but the utmost excess of rage of the multitude, and of the president, and of the soldiers, fell upon Sanctus, deacon at Vienne; and upon Maturus, newly baptized indeed, yet a most valiant champion; and upon Attalus, a native of Pergamos, who always was a pillar and support of the churches here; and upon Blandina, by whom Christ shewed that those things which among men seem mean, base, and contemptible, are by God accounted worthy of great honour for their love toward him, which is evidently manifested in great power, and not in appearance only boasted of.”—It was a refreshment and ease to her, and an abatement of the torments inflicted upon her, to say, “I am a Christian, nor is there any wickedness practised among us.”—

“Pothinus, who was entrusted with the administration of the episcopal office at Lyons, being more than ninety years of age, and very weak in body, and scarcely breathing by reason of his bodily infirmity, but strengthened in mind with a desire of the martyrdom now in view, even he also was dragged to the tribunal. His body was worn out by age and distemper, but his soul yet remained in him, that by it Christ might triumph. He being brought before the tribunal by the sol-



diers, the city magistrate also attending, and the multitude hooting him all along with loud shouts, as if he had been Christ himself, exhibited a good testimony. Being asked by the president, 'Who was the God of the Christians?' he answered, 'If you are worthy, you shall know.' After that he was dragged about in an inhuman manner, and received many blows, they who were near striking him with their hands and their feet, without any respect to his age; they who stood farther off threw at him whatever came to hand, every one thinking himself guilty of an offence against religion if he did not offer him some abuse, for hereby they thought they should avenge their gods. And when there was scarcely any breath left in him, he was cast into prison, where after two days he expired.

"Maturus, then, and Sanctus, and Blandina, and Atalus, were brought to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, to be a public spectacle to the inhumanity of the Gentiles; a day for combat of wild beasts having been purposely granted upon our account. And Maturus and Sanctus did again undergo all sorts of torments in the amphitheatre, as if they had before suffered nothing at all. Or rather having already overcome the adversary in many encounters, and being



now to contend for the crown itself, they again endured in the way to it the accustomed blows of the place, and the tearings of the wild beasts, and whatever else the mad multitude from all sides called for and demanded; and, after all these things, the iron chair upon which, when their bodies were broiled, they yielded the offensive smell of burnt flesh. Nor were they yet satisfied, but were still more enraged, being earnestly desirous to overcome the patience of the sufferers. However, they could get nothing from Sanctus more than the confession which he had made at the first. These two, therefore, (Maturus and Sanctus) having undergone a severe combat, their life having continued a long while, they were at last slain, having been made throughout that day a spectacle to the world, instead of all that variety which is usually exhibited in the combats of gladiators, (1 Cor. iv. 9.)—But Blandina, after she had been scourged, after she had been exposed to wild beasts, and after the iron chair, she was enclosed in a net, and thrown to a bull; having been often tossed by the beast, she also was run through with a sword.

“ Now Attalus was earnestly called for by the multitude, for indeed he was an eminent person, and, by reason of the clearness of his conscience,



came forth as a champion prepared for the combat; for he was well exercised in the Christian discipline, and was always a witness of the truth among us. He was led round this amphitheatre, with a board carried before him, upon which was inscribed in the Roman tongue, "This is Attalus the Christian," the people all the while expressing great indignation against him. The president, understanding that he was a Roman, commanded him to be taken away, and to be carried to the rest who were in prison, concerning whom he had sent to Cæsar, and was in expectation of an answer.—The rescript of Cæsar was, that they who confessed Christ should be put to death; but that, if any denied themselves to be Christians, they might be set at liberty.

"The public assembly of this place being now begun, at which there is a vast concourse of people from all parts, the president ordered the blessed martyrs to be brought before the tribunal exposing them as a public show to the multitude. Having again interrogated them, as many as he found to be Roman citizens, he ordered to be beheaded; the rest to be sent to the wild beasts. But Christ was greatly glorified in those who before had denied the faith, but now, contrary to the expectation of the Gentiles,



confessed themselves to be Christians. They were interrogated apart, as being now to be dismissed, and set at liberty; but making confession, they were added to the number of the martyrs. —Attalus, when he was set in the iron chair, and was scorched all over, and an offensive smell of burnt flesh proceeded from his body, spoke to the multitude in the Roman tongue. ‘This,’ says he, ‘is to devour men, which is your practice. As for us, we neither devour men, nor do we commit any other wickedness whatever.’ Being asked what is the name of God? he answered ‘God has not a name as men have.’

“Those who had been suffocated in prison, they cast to the dogs, carefully watching them day and night, lest any of us should inter them. Then they laid out the remainder of the bodies left unconsumed by the fire, partly torn, and partly burnt, and the heads of the rest, with the trunks of their bodies; all these they kept unburied, with a guard of soldiers many days. Some were filled with indignation, and gnashed with their teeth at the dead, as if desirous to be farther revenged upon them. Some insulted over them, and derided them, at the same time extolling their idols, and attributing to them the punishment that had been inflicted on the martyrs. Some



who were more mild, and seemed in some measure to sympathize with us, nevertheless upbraided us, saying, ‘Where is their God, and of what benefit has their religion been to them, which they have preferred above their lives?’ In the mean time, we were greatly concerned that we could not bury the bodies in the earth, for neither did the darkness of the night afford us any assistance, nor would money persuade, nor entreaties prevail; but they continued to watch the bodies very carefully, as if some great matter were to be gained by their not being buried.—The bodies, therefore, of the martyrs having undergone all manner of ignominy, and having lain exposed to the air six days, were burnt, and having been reduced to ashes by these impious men, were by them thrown into the river Rhone, which runs hard by, that no remains of them might be any longer visible on this earth. Thus they acted as if they could be too hard for God, and prevent their reviviscence, or as themselves said, that they might have no hope of a resurrection, trusting to which they have brought in among us a strange and new religion, and despising the heaviest sufferings, are ready to meet death with cheerfulness. Let us now see whether they will rise again, and whether their God



is able to help them, and to deliver them out of our hands."

The above persecutions, it will be observed, happened under Marcus Antoninus the philosopher, one of the most celebrated of the Roman emperors. His rescript was, *that they who confessed Christ should be put to death*, but that if any denied themselves to be Christians, they might be set at liberty. By the edict of Trajan, such Christians as were brought before a governor's tribunal, and were convicted, were to be put to death; but they were not to be sought for. But the President at Lyons issued public orders, that strict searches should be made for them. Attalus was a Roman citizen, and should have been beheaded; but, being a Christian, this privilege was not allowed. The multitude demanded that he should be tortured, and thrown to wild beasts; and the President granted their request, relying undoubtedly upon impunity, though he acted contrary to law. Such was the condition of Christians at that time.

We have here a melancholy exhibition of "the persecuting spirit of Pagans," and are reminded of Mr Gibbon's declaration, that, "during the whole course of his reign, Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sove-



reign." And we are again brought to recollect Mr Hume's assertions respecting persecution, which, in connection with the above facts, may prove a useful warning to those who read his Essays, and convince them that on dependence is to be placed on his most confident assertions when the Christian religion is concerned. "The intolerance," he says, "of almost all religions which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable as the *contrary* PRINCIPLE of *Polytheists*." And again, "The tolerating spirit of idolaters, both in ancient and modern times, is very obvious to any one who is the least conversant in the writings of historians or travellers."

The testimony to the truth of the Gospel by these sufferers, in that early age, is very valuable. Irenæus, now an elder in the church at Lyons, was in his younger days acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of John the Apostle; and Pothinus, Bishop at Lyons, was older than Irenæus. We have here, too, a proof of the great progress of the Christian religion in a short time. The number of Christians at Lyons and Vienne must have been very considerable. There were among them men of distinction for knowledge and understanding. Attalus, and several others, were Roman citizens.



The testimony of the first Christians is the more valuable, as it is given by men of all ranks in society, and of all the different countries through which they were settled. It is the testimony of men who were not guided by any civil authority or worldly consideration in the religion they embraced, but by the force of truth and conviction alone; and of men who had the deepest concern not to be deceived. It is the testimony of competent judges of the evidence by which they were convinced, presented to them in facts of which they were eye-witnesses, and in which they could not be mistaken. It is testimony transmitted to us from the most enlightened period of the Roman empire,—from a multitude of men whose integrity is acknowledged by their enemies, and from among whom individuals may be selected, equally enlightened with any of their contemporaries.



## CHAP. V.

*The Testimony of the Apostles and First Christians is not opposed by any contrary Testimony.*

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**T**HE facts which accompanied the first appearance of the Christian religion, are inseparable from it. If these could be proved to be false, the whole would fall to the ground. The appearance and life of Jesus Christ, the miracles he performed, and those which his Apostles as publicly wrought after his death, are matters of fact asserted by his followers, and so indubitably believed by them, that they shed their blood in attestation of their truth. Immediately after the death of Christ, these facts were publicly and boldly asserted by his servants, in the very city where they had taken place. At length, being



driven from Jerusalem, they spread the report of them without delay, and with great effect, through every corner of the Roman empire. Within a few years, the Apostles likewise dispersed abroad a number of writings, containing a full account of these facts, and also of the means they had employed to propagate them, declaring both their success and the opposition they had met with. This matter was of the greatest importance, both to the present and future interests of mankind. If what the Apostles reported was true, all the other religions in the world were false, and even the Jewish economy must be set aside. The interest, therefore, which would be felt in every country to oppose and put down this new religion, is sufficiently manifest.

Accordingly, the most violent opposition was everywhere excited. Jews and Heathens went hand in hand in ridiculing and defaming, in reasoning against and persecuting, in imprisoning and putting to death, those who propagated and adhered to the Christian faith. But one method they did not employ,—they *did not contradict the facts*. So far from being contradicted, the *facts* and the *miracles* on which Christianity rests were *on all hands admitted*, and reasoned on both by Jews and Gentiles.



Nothing, in such circumstances, but *truth*, could have commanded such acquiescence. A contrary statement, by authority of the Jewish or Roman governments, to the writings of the Apostles, which were so widely circulated, would have done more to check the progress of the Christian religion, and its future increase, than all the reasonings of the philosophers, and all the persecuting edicts of the Roman emperors. We are therefore certain, that if, in opposition to facts so well established, such a statement could have been expected to have any weight, and not to recoil with disgrace upon its authors, it would have been resorted to. But nothing of this kind appeared; neither is there the smallest hint of the falsehood of the Gospel history to be found in any of the public edicts for suppressing Christianity; and in none of the controversies or disputes concerning it, is any thing like such a charge brought forward. The philosophers, who wrote avowedly against the Christian religion, had recourse to the Gospels themselves, which they allowed to be authentic, for confuting the opinions they contain. And not the smallest vestige in antiquity of any contradictory statement, either public or private, is to be found.

Thus, from the very beginning, the Gospels



were acknowledged, by friends and foes, as the authentic and genuine productions of the persons whose names they bore as their authors, when it was so easy a matter to have proved them spurious, had they been so, especially as all the power was in the hands of enemies.

The Scriptures, too, were written in such a way, that detection, in case of error or fraud, was inevitable. The events they relate are detailed with the greatest minuteness as to time, place, and circumstances, connected with numerous public facts, and names of public men. The occasions also on which the miracles were wrought are stated, and often the names of the persons who were the subjects of them, (some of them well known characters,) with their places of abode, are given,—while the general facts respecting Jesus Christ, as claiming to be the Messiah, were of the most public nature, connected with the government, and involving the interests and characters of the whole Jewish nation, especially of the chief men and rulers.

Every thing, besides, was carried on in the most open manner, not in “remote countries, among ignorant and barbarous people,” but first in Jerusalem, which was the principal scene of action, and afterwards in Rome, and the chief



cities of the empire. As this is the acknowledged fact, we may here borrow some assistance from Mr Hume, to shew what would *certainly* have been the issue had there been any fallacy in the case. Speaking, in his Essay on Miracles, of the impostor Alexander, he says, “ ’Twas a wise policy in that cunning impostor Alexander, who, though now forgotten, was once so famous to lay the first scene of his imposture in Paphlagonia, where, as Lucian tells us, the people were extremely ignorant and stupid, and ready to swallow even the grossest delusion.—Had Alexander fixed his residence at Athens, the philosophers of that renowned mart of learning had immediately spread, thro’ the whole Roman empire, their sense of the matter, which, being supported by so great authority, and displayed by all the force of reasoning and eloquence, had entirely opened the eyes of mankind.” This, every one will agree with Mr Hume, would unquestionably have been the case; and as one of the Apostles did appear in Athens, “ that renowned mart of learning,” and there did publicly proclaim his doctrine in the face of all the philosophers who “ encountered him,” we shall leave it to Mr Hume’s successors to explain the reason why and how it happened, that although this Apostle exposed the



“superstition” of these philosophers, in erecting an altar “to the unknown God,” and charged them with “*ignorantly*” worshipping him, the philosophers did not immediately spread through the whole Roman empire their sense of the matter, supported by their great authority, and displayed by all their force of reasoning and eloquence, and so entirely open the eyes of mankind.

In order to judge of the strength of evidence that arises to Christianity, from the universal admission of those facts on which its truth is founded, it is necessary to take a view of the situation in which the Jewish rulers, and also others in authority, were placed by their publication.

The Apostles, in the face of the world, asserted that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah promised in the Jewish Scriptures, and that all the prophecies were fulfilled in him. They also declared the reception he met with, and the means by which he was opposed. The publication of these things necessarily involved a full exposure of the characters, as well as conduct of the Jewish rulers. They were openly described as perverters of those Scriptures which they professed to teach, as blind guides, and totally unqualified for the stations they held. They were represented as hypocrites, occupied with main-



taining a good outward appearance, while their hearts were full of covetousness and all kinds of uncleanness, as devouring widows' houses, and *for a pretence* making long prayers. They were declared to have minutely scrutinized some of the miracles of Jesus, and to have been filled with rage because these investigations only tended more completely to establish their truth; and they were even charged with consulting to put to death a man who was raised from the dead, in order to counteract the effect this miracle had produced. Other miracles, it is asserted, they themselves witnessed, which Jesus wrought in the most public manner in the temple, upon his assuming an authority in it which they could not resist, and just after he had made a public entry into Jerusalem, accompanied by circumstances which pointed out the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, in such a way as could not be evaded. It is shewn that on many occasions they attempted to reason with him, alleging passages of Scripture, which they perverted, to entangle him; but that they were always foiled, and confuted themselves. At other times, when he put questions to them, being unable to answer him, that they were compelled, before the people, to shew, by their silence, that they were unfit to be teachers; that sometimes they laid snares to entrap him in his



words; but their artifices uniformly recoiled on themselves, so that at last they were afraid to ask him any more questions. Their conduct was such that he publicly declared they were serpents, a generation of vipers, who could not escape the damnation of hell. Roused to the highest pitch of indignation, on account of the situation in which they found themselves placed, and of the consequences to their power that they dreaded, they took measures to put him to death. They bribed, it is declared, one of his followers to betray him, procured false witnesses to accuse him, and urged on the Roman governor, against his conscience, to condemn him. After crucifying him, they procured a guard of Roman soldiers to be set at his tomb, to watch the body till the third day, when they knew he had said he would rise again. The guard, it was asserted, fled from their post, and reported what they had seen at the sepulchre, when they bribed them to say his disciples had conveyed away the body while they were asleep. This exposure of the conduct of the Jewish rulers, was incessantly circulated, both in Jerusalem, and in all the principal cities of the Roman empire.

No other instance in the history of the world can be given, in which men in power were ever placed in such unpleasant and disgraceful cir-



cumstances as these Jewish rulers were, both in their public and private capacities. Accordingly we find, that, *except denying the facts*, which had it been possible was the most obvious, the easiest, and most effectual method, they stood at nothing to relieve themselves from the disagreeable situation they were placed in, not even at the suborning of false witnesses and murder. Justin Martyr expressly charges the Jews with having sent chosen men to every part of the Roman empire, who gave out that the Christians were Atheists, and raised all manner of calumnies against them. It is easy then to perceive, that the desire of these rulers was as great as their inducement was strong, to go as far as possible to discredit what was thus publicly laid to their charge. But the only instance of any thing like a contrary statement to that of the Apostles, appears in the story of the guard at the sepulchre, which confutes itself. Had the soldiers, through such unwatchfulness as was ascribed to them, actually allowed the body to be stolen, and so have occasioned to the Jewish rulers so great a disappointment, and such consequences as followed their not being able to produce the body after the third day, these rulers, we may be assured, would have been the first to have demanded that punishment to be inflicted, which, by the Roman



military laws, would have inevitably taken place. This is so clear, that it is to be observed, the rulers did not use any effectual means to contradict the confutation of their statement, which the Apostles so soon afterwards circulated. In this case, however, they went as far as was in their power. And, absurd as the story they propagated is, it will not be easy to find a better for their purpose.

The nature of the facts charged against these rulers was such, that if unfounded, even in part, they could have been easily disproved. For instance, it was publicly circulated, that on the appearance of strangers from the East inquiring for the Messiah, the chief priests and scribes were summoned by Herod the King, to inform him from the prophetical books where he should be born. That Herod, in consequence, murdered all the young children in Bethlehem; that John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Messiah; that Jesus Christ performed many miracles throughout Judea, and also before the rulers; that the Apostles having publicly healed a man, well known in Jerusalem, who had been lame from his birth, the rulers called them before the council, and commanded them to speak no more in the name of Jesus; when the Apostles replied in these words: "Ye



rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." When "beholding the man who was healed standing with them, the rulers could say nothing against it." On the contrary, they said to one another, "What shall we do to these men, for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is manifest to all men that dwell in Jerusalem, and WE CANNOT DENY IT?*"

Afterwards, when multitudes of sick people were brought from the country, and publicly healed in the streets of Jerusalem by the Apostles, the high priests and the Sadducees cast the latter into the common prison. Next day, when they sent for them to appear before the council, which had been summoned for the purpose, the messengers reported that they had found the prison securely shut, and the keepers before the doors, but no man within. Soon after the council sent for them to the Temple, where they heard they were publicly teaching, and brought them before them without violence for fear of the people. The Apostles then charged them with having put



to death the Messiah, and declared themselves witnesses that God had raised him up; but notwithstanding this, by the advice of Gamaliel, one of the council, who made a speech on the occasion, (which is also recorded by the Apostles), the rulers dismissed them.

These were memorable public facts, which, if not true, could with the greatest ease and certainty have been proved to be false. Why then did not the Jewish rulers as publicly and solemnly deny them, as they were publicly and solemnly laid to their charge? Such specified facts, if unfounded, or if even only true in part, could have been set aside at once, especially by men in power; and nothing but their being of such *public notoriety*, that it was in vain to deny them, can account for their tacit admission of the whole.

But besides their character, the rank, the power, and every thing connected with the official stations of the Jewish rulers, were all at stake. If this new doctrine was truth, and succeeded, it necessarily involved the abolition of the whole Mosaic economy, of which they were the priests and governors. And of this they were fully aware. For, on hearing of the raising of Lazarus by Jesus from the dead, "the chief Priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, what



do we? *for this man doeth many miracles.* If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away *both our place* and our nation." This too was publicly circulated by the Apostles.

The Jewish rulers, in every way most deeply implicated, both in character and interest, and who themselves *witnessed*, on the spot, the whole progress of the business, were the best qualified to detect any fraud in the case, if such there had been. But so far from contradicting, they are cited, we see, as witnesses in the writings of the Apostles, published in their own age and country, in which they are made to avow to the world the truth of the miracles, and to authenticate the whole train of the history. Here then, we have not merely their *silence*, but their *testimony*. That men, with all the power of government in their hands, (which continued in it for nearly 40 years after the charges by the Apostles were publicly preferred against them,) should have suffered such facts, if not so manifestly true as to admit of no refutation, to pass uncontradicted, to the complete degradation of their characters, and the utter destruction of their power, is morally impossible. History never did, and, while man is man, never can furnish such an example.



Nor were the characters of the Jewish rulers alone implicated by these public statements: the conduct of Herod the King is shewn to have been highly improper; while that of the Roman governor is proved to have been most degrading. He is represented as having condemned Jesus through fear of the Jews, after publicly declaring that he believed him to be innocent. Felix, the governor at Cæsarea, is also charged with having detained Paul as a prisoner, unjustly, in order that he might induce him to give money for his release. He is likewise represented as trembling when Paul reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The unjust conduct of the magistrates of the city of Philippi, and afterwards the submission they were compelled to make, when they learnt that Paul was a Roman citizen, is likewise detailed. Several particulars besides are mentioned, which occurred before some of the well known and principal men of the time; as Agrippa the King, Gallio the elder brother of Seneca the philosopher, and others who are mentioned in the history by name.

The credit of the Roman government was also deeply implicated. Where the rulers and statesmen were the ministers of religion, and the Emperor *pontifex maximus*, and where no idea of the principle of toleration existed, we may judge of



the light in which the chief men at Rome would view the rise of the Christian religion. That in its early progress it was not unobserved and neglected by them, is evident from the language of asperity used by Tacitus, in speaking of Christians in the first persecution. Nothing, we may be assured, would be neglected, that could tend to overthrow or retard the progress of a system which exposed all the ceremonies of their worship (managed for the purpose of supporting the authority of government) as not only ridiculous and absurd, but impious and abominable in the sight of God. It is certain that every means which capacity, diligence, or power, could effect, would be resorted to. And if, amidst such violent opposition as soon took place, neither the Government nor the Philosophers ever denied the *facts* of Christianity, we shall fall short of the reason, if we ascribe merely to their *truth* what can only be accounted for by their NOTORIETY.

From a consideration of the foregoing circumstances, we may judge of the strength of evidence that arises to the Christian religion from there having *never been any contradictory statement from any quarter, opposed to the testimony of the Apostles.*



## CHAP. VI.

*Testimony to the Facts of the Gospel History,  
from the admissions of those who professedly  
opposed or wrote against Christianity.*

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IN the year 140, Trypho, a Jew, a violent opposer of the Christian religion, with four companions equally enemies to it, held a dialogue at Ephesus with Justin Martyr, which the latter committed to writing. In the course of this discussion, Justin often mentioned the facts contained in the Gospels, and appealed to particular miracles which Jesus had wrought; yet Trypho and his companions, who joined in the dispute, *never denied these miracles, nor called any of the facts mentioned by the Evangelists in question.* All the objections which he raised against the Gospels were taken from the supposed absurdity of certain particulars affirmed in them. For example, he says, “it is foolish to suppose that Christ “is God, and became man;” and he affirms it to



be incredible that Jesus was born of a virgin. He thinks it impossible to prove, that any other can be God besides the Maker of the world. What his opinions on such points were, is of no consequence in the question before us. But we here find all that can be required in point of testimony. The facts which lie at the foundation of the Gospel are admitted by Trypho; while, as being a Jew, he had every access to know what had taken place in his own country, on so important a subject, but a few years before he was born. As the Apostle John lived till about the year 101, Trypho must have been born either before, or soon after, John's death.

Justin having cited the prophecy, Dan. vii. 13, which describes the kingdom of the Son of Man, Trypho replied, "These, and such like Scriptures, constrained us to *expect* him great and illustrious, who, as the Son of Man, was to receive from the Ancient of days the eternal kingdom; but he who is called your Christ was without reputation and glory, so that he fell under the greatest curse of the law of God, for he was crucified." In the following passage, Trypho bears a testimony to the character of Jesus; "In the fables of the Greeks it is said, that Perseus was born of Danae whilst a virgin, he who is



called by them Jupiter having fallen upon her in the form of gold. Now, ye who affirm the same thing ought to be ashamed, and should say rather that this Jesus was man of man. And if you could shew from the Scriptures (the Jewish Scriptures) that he is the Christ, because he lived according to the law, and perfectly, you might say he was thought worthy to be chosen Christ, and not dare to speak wonders, lest you be convicted of equal folly with the Greeks."

Justin affirmed that the Jews knew that Jesus arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven; and neither Trypho nor his companions contradicted this. "For the other nations," says Justin, "have not proceeded to such a degree of wickedness against Christ as you, who are even to them the authors of evil suspicions against that holy person, and against us his disciples. For after ye had crucified that only blameless and just person, by whose stripes healing has come to all who approach the Father through him; *when you knew that he was risen from the dead and ascended into heaven*, as the Prophets foretold should happen, you not only did not repent of the evil things you had committed, but, choosing chief men at Jerusalem, you sent them forth into all the earth to publish that the sect of the



Christians were Atheists, spreading in their discourses those evil things concerning us, which all who are ignorant of us affirm; so that you are not only the cause of this iniquity among yourselves, but among all other men whatever."

The following view which TRYPHO takes of the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures is worthy of notice, as coming from a Jew. Justin having shewn, by many quotations from these Scriptures, that another besides the Father is called God, Trypho replied, " You have, my friend, strongly, and by many passages, demonstrated this: it remains that you shew that this person, according to the will of his Father, submitted to become man of a virgin, to be crucified, to die, to arise afterwards, and to return to heaven."

LUCIAN was a native of Samosata in Syria: he was born some time in the reign of Adrian, which began in the year 117, and terminated in 138. Although he did not expressly write in opposition to Christianity, he was strongly prejudiced against it. He gives the following account of Peregrinus, who publicly burnt himself in Greece soon after the Olympic games, about the year 165. Peregrinus, or Proteus, appears for a while to have imposed on the Christians, and to have joined himself to them. Lucian,



after saying that “Peregrinus learned the wonderful doctrine of the Christians by conversing with their priests and scribes near Palestine,” and after going on to observe, that they “still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine, because he introduced into the world this new religion,” he adds—“For this reason Proteus was taken up and put in prison, which very thing was of no small service to him afterwards, for giving reputation to his impostures, and gratifying his vanity. The Christians were much grieved for his imprisonment, and tried all ways to procure his liberty. Not being able to effect that, they did him all sorts of kind offices; and that not in a careless manner, but with the greatest assiduity; for even betimes in the morning, there would be at the prison old women, some widows, and also little orphan children; and some of the chief of their men, by corrupting the keepers, would get into prison, and stay the whole night there with him: there they had a good supper together, and their sacred discourses. And this excellent Peregrinus (for so he was still called) was thought by them to be an extraordinary person, no less than another Socrates. Even from the cities of Asia, some Christians came to him, by an order of the body, to relieve, encourage, and comfort him. For it is incredible what



expedition they use, when any of their friends are known to be in trouble. In a word, they spare nothing upon such an occasion; and Peregrinus's chain brought him in a good sum of money from them. For these miserable men have no doubt but they shall be immortal, and live for ever; therefore they contemn death, and many surrender themselves to sufferings. Moreover their first lawgiver has taught them, that they are all brethren when once they have turned, and renounced the gods of the Greeks, and worship that Master of theirs who was crucified, and engage to live according to his laws. They have also a sovereign contempt for all the things of this world, and look upon them as common, and trust one another with them without any particular security; for which reason, any subtle fellow, by good management, may impose upon this simple people, and grow rich among them." Lucian afterwards informs us, that Peregrinus was set at liberty by the governor of Syria, and that at length he parted from the Christians.

We have here an authentic testimony, from a Heathen writer, who was well acquainted with mankind, to some of the main facts and principles of Christianity. That the founder of the Christian religion was crucified in Palestine; that he was the great Master of the Christians, and



the first author of the principles received by them ; that these men called Christians had peculiarly strong hopes of immortal life, and a great contempt for this world and its enjoyments ; that they courageously endured many afflictions upon account of their principles, and sometimes surrendered themselves to sufferings. Honesty and probity prevailed so much among them, that they trusted each other without security. Their Master had earnestly recommended to all his followers mutual love, by which also they were much distinguished ; and their assiduity in relieving and comforting one another when under affliction, was known to all men. It is no disparagement to them that they were imposed upon by Peregrinus, who was admired by many others.

THE principal Heathen opponents, who during the first four centuries wrote against the Christian religion, were Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian. A great part of the works of these writers have come down to the present time in the answers that were made to them, in which their objections are stated minutely, by writers whose quotations from other works that are still extant are made with the greatest exactness. Of



the genuineness of these extracts we have sufficient evidence. The dispute was of a public nature, and concerned all. It was carried on under the eye of friends and enemies, in writings which were published in the usual manner to which every one had access. In such circumstances, if the Christian writers had either overlooked, mutilated, or mis-stated their opponents arguments, it would only have exposed themselves, and discredited the cause they were supporting. But as their answers are so minute, containing what they say were the exact words of the writings they opposed, at a time when these writings were all extant, and in every one's hands, we have full evidence of their faithfulness. The representation they give too of the arguments used, is abundantly credible, and in general they are such as are advanced to the present day. Had any others been brought forward, there can be no doubt that, amidst such a multitude of writers of all kinds, they would, in one way or another, have been transmitted or alluded to.

CELSUS, contemporary with Lucian, was an Epicurean philosopher, who lived in the reign of Adrian. He was one of the most virulent adversaries the Christian religion ever had,



and also a man of considerable parts and learning. The book which he wrote against the Christians, in the year 176, was entitled, the "True Word." He there introduces a Jew declaiming against Jesus Christ, and against such Jews as were converted to Christianity. Origen's answer to Celsus is not a general reply, but a minute examination of all his objections, even those which appeared the most frivolous. He states the objections of Celsus in his own words; and, that nothing might escape him, he takes them, he says, in the order in which Celsus placed them:

Celsus used only the Gospels themselves, in search of evidence against their truth. He never refers to any spurious Gospel, or to any other accounts of the life of Christ. His attack is conducted *not by denying the facts* contained in the Scriptures, of which he all along *admits* the truth, but by reasoning from such as the following topics: That it was absurd to esteem and worship one as God who was acknowledged to have been a man, and to have suffered death: That Christ invited sinners to enter into the kingdom of God: That it was inconsistent with his supposed dignity, to come to save such low and despicable creatures as the Jews and Christians:



That he spake dishonourably and impiously of God : That the doctrines and precepts of religion are better taught by the Greek philosophers, than in the Gospels ; and without the threatenings of God. The following are specimens of the objections he brings forward.

“ What need was there for carrying thee, while an infant, into Egypt, that thou mightest not be slain ? For it did not become God to be afraid of death.”—“ How can we think him God, who, to omit other things, performed none of those matters which we are told he promised ? And who, being condemned by us, when he was sought to be punished, was caught basely lurking and flying, being betrayed by those whom he called his disciples ?”—“ If you tell them, that it is not the Son of God, but he who is Father of all whom men ought to worship ; they will not be satisfied unless you also worship him who is the author of their sedition ; not that they exceed in the worship of God, but that they above measure worship this man.” Speaking of the crucifixion, Celsus says, “ If not before, why did he not now, at least, exert his divinity, and deliver himself from this ignominy, and treat those as they deserved, who behaved ignominiously both towards himself and his Father.”—“ If these



men worshipped no other but the one God, they might justly inveigh against all other Gods. But now they out of measure worship one who but lately appeared, and yet imagine they do not sin against God, though they also serve his minister." He affirms that Jesus, being "brought up obscurely, and obliged to serve for hire in Egypt, learned there certain powerful arts, for which the Egyptians are renowned; then returned greatly elated with his power, on account of which he declared himself a God."

Celsus represents Jesus to have lived but a few years before. He mentions its being said that Jesus was born of a virgin; that angels appeared to Joseph. He speaks of the star that appeared at the birth of Jesus,—the wise men that came to worship him, when an infant, and Herod's massacring the children;—Joseph's fleeing with the child into Egypt, by the admonition of an angel;—the Holy Ghost descending on Jesus like a dove, when he was baptized by John, and the voice from heaven declaring him to be the Son of God;—his going about with his disciples, whom he calls boatmen, publicans, and wicked sailors;—his healing the sick and lame, and raising the dead;—his foretelling his own sufferings and resurrection;—his being betrayed, forsaken by his own



disciples ;—his sufferings ;—his praying “ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ;” —the ignominious treatment he met with ;—the robe that was put upon him ;—the crown of thorns ;—the reed put into his hand ; his drinking vinegar and gall ;—and his being scourged and crucified ;—his being seen after his resurrection, by a fanatical woman, (as he calls her, meaning Mary Magdalene,) and by his own companions and disciples ;—his shewing them his hands that were pierced ;—the marks of his punishment. He also mentions the angels being seen at his sepulchre, and that some said it was one angel, others that it was two ; by which he hints at the seeming variation in the accounts given of it by the Evangelists. Upon the whole, there are in Celsus about eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament, or references to them, of which Origen has taken notice. And whilst he argues from them, sometimes in a very perverse manner, he still takes it for granted, as the *foundation* of his argument, that whatever absurdities could be fastened upon any words or actions of Christ, recorded in the Gospels, it would be a valid objection against Christianity.

The reasoning then on both sides of this dispute proceeded on the supposition of the truth of the



Gospel history. Celsus also grants that Christ wrought miracles. The difference between him and Origen, on this subject, lies in the manner of accounting for them; the one ascribing them to magic, the other to the power of God.

Thus it appears, by the testimony of one of the most virulent opposers of Christianity, that the accounts concerning Christ were written by his own disciples, in the age in which the facts concerning him took place; and, in the next age, there was no dispute concerning them, when, had they not stated what was truth, it would have been so easy to have convicted them of falsehood.

PORPHYRY the philosopher, was born at Tyre, in Phenicia, about the year 233. He wrote a large Treatise against the Christian religion, of which he was a very able and learned opponent. He endeavours to overthrow the authority of the Scriptures, not by denying their authenticity, but by endeavouring to point out in them contradictions and absurdities; but he opposes no contradicting statement. He does not deny the miracles, but calls them "the works of cunning demons," and refers to some who he asserts performed miracles as great. He



appears to have been well acquainted with the Scriptures, and refers to numerous passages and circumstances in them, which he perverts, after the manner of Celsus, pointing out what he deems immoral and absurd. "If Christ," he objects, "be the way of salvation, the truth, and the life, and they only who believe in him can be saved, what became of the men who lived before his coming?"—"Christ threatens everlasting punishment to those who do not believe him, and yet in another place he says, with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again, which is absurd and contradictory; for all measure must be limited to time." He objects that Peter was reprov'd by Paul, for that he did not proceed uprightly in preaching the Gospel. Hence he argues the falsehood of the whole doctrine, as if it were a mere invention, since the heads of the churches disagreed. Other passages of Scripture he reasons upon in a similar manner. The cause why Æsculapius wrought no cures, as he says, in his time, and why the other gods no longer gave responses, neither intermeddled in the affairs of men, he ascribes wholly to the honour that was given to Jesus;—"Since Jesus has been honoured, none have received any public benefit from the gods."



Notwithstanding what he says against the Christians, Porphyry gives an honourable testimony to the character of Jesus Christ. In his treatise, entitled "Philosophy of Oracles," the following passage, preserved by Eusebius, occurs :

"What we are going to say may perhaps appear to some a paradox, for the gods declared Christ to be a person most pious, and become immortal. Moreover they speak of him honourably." And going on, he adds; "being asked concerning Christ, whether he is God, he (Apollo) answered, 'That he who is renowned for wisdom, knows that the immortal soul continues after the body; but the pious soul of that man is most excelling.' He therefore affirmed him to be a most pious person, and that his soul, which the foolish Christians worship, like that of other good men, was after death made immortal; but being asked why he was punished? he answered, 'That the body indeed is ever liable to little torments; but the soul of the pious rests in the plain of heaven.' And, immediately after this oracle, he adds, "He was therefore a pious person, and went to heaven, as pious persons do, for which cause you ought not to speak evil of him, but to pity the folly of the men," (namely who worship him.)

HIEROCLES the philosopher was prefect at



Alexandria, in the year 303. He composed two books in order to confute the Christian religion. To these books Eusebius published an answer, which still remains. Hierocles endeavours to prove the falsehood of the Scriptures, by attempting to shew that they contradict themselves, for which purpose he makes observations on a great number of particular passages. The proof of Christianity, from the miracles of Jesus, he tries to invalidate, not by denying the facts themselves, but by shewing that one Apollonius had performed equal, if not greater miracles, which were recorded, he says, not by ignorant men like Peter and Paul; but by Maximus of Ægis, and Damis a philosopher. "Now," says he, "we reckon him who did such wonderful things, not a god, but only a man, whereas they (the Christians) give the appellation of God to Jesus, because he performed a few miracles." Lactantius, in remarking on this, affirms, that the difference between the miracles performed by Jesus, and all impostors whatever, is evident from the manner in which they were regarded by mankind.

JULIAN, the Roman Emperor, succeeded to the throne of the Cæsars in the year 361. He had once made a profession of Christianity, but afterwards abandoned it. In the year 363, he



wrote a treatise in three books against the Christians, and to confute the Christian religion, against which he shews great inveteracy. Libanius the Sophist, who was acquainted with Julian, says, "He wrote a treatise to shew that these books which make the Man of Palestine to be God, contained nothing but silly and ridiculous matters." Cyril wrote an answer to this work, in which he transcribes many passages from it at length. Julian, like the others whose works we have been considering, *acknowledges the principle facts* of the Gospel history. The nature of Julian's objections, as well as his admission of the facts related, will be seen from the following extracts: "Jesus having persuaded a few among you, and those of the worst of men, has now been celebrated about three hundred years, having done nothing in his lifetime worthy of remembrance, unless any one thinks it a mighty matter to heal lame and blind people, and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Béthany."—"Jesus whom you preach was one of Cæsar's subjects. If you refuse this, I will prove it by and by. But the thing is acknowledged: For you say, that he, with his father and mother, was enrolled under Cerenius. Now, after he was born, what good did he do to his



relations ? For he says they would not obey him."

Alluding to the superstitious contentions of the Christians of that time about the observance of Easter, he says, " These things flow entirely from yourselves, for no where has Jesus or Paul delivered you these things, commanding you to do them. The reason is, they did not expect that ever you would attain to this degree of power ; for they were content if they deceived servant-maids and slaves, and by their means some wives and husbands, such as Cornelius and Sergius ; of whom, if the one is remembered among the noted men of that time, for these things happened in the reign of Tiberius or Claudius, do you think that I lie concerning the rest ?"

" You are so unfortunate that you do not continue in those things which were delivered to you by the Apostles. For their successors have dressed them up for the worse, and more impiously. For neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, ventured to call Jesus, God. But that good man John, perceiving that numbers of the Grecian and Italian cities were caught with that distemper, and hearing, as I suppose, that the sepulchres of Peter and Paul were privately wor-



shipped, was the first who had the boldness to pronounce it." Further, he objects what John says. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him. Whether then is this God word made flesh, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father? and if he is the same, as I think, then certainly even you have seen God; for he dwelt among you, and ye beheld his glory."

Speaking of the Christians, he scoffingly says, "Not only they of his time, but that some of those who at the beginning received the word from Paul, were such, is apparent from what Paul himself says, writing to them. For I presume he was not so void of shame, as to send them such reproaches in his letter to them, if he had not known them to be just. These are the things which he writes of his disciples, and to themselves. 'Be not deceived; neither idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And you are not ignorant, brethren, that such were you also. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of Jesus Christ,' 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.



You see they were such, but they had been sanctified and washed, having been cleansed and scoured with water, which penetrates even to the soul. And baptism, which cannot heal the leprosy, nor the gout, nor the dysentery, nor any other distemper of the body, takes away adulteries, extortions, and all other sins of the soul." In the above passage, Julian says, "I presume he was not so void of shame as to send them such reproaches in his letter to them, if he had not known them to be just." This is the very argument formerly insisted on respecting the testimony of the first Christians, to whom the Epistles were addressed, which must have been applicable to them, or they would never have been received and acknowledged by them.

In a letter to Arsacius, high priest of Galatia, referring to the impiety of the Heathens, Julian recommends the example of the Christians: "Why do we not look to that which has been the principal cause of the augmentation of impiety, humanity to strangers, care in burying the dead, and that sanctity of life of which they make such a show? all which things I will have to be really practised by our people. It is not sufficient that you are unblameable yourself, all the priests in Galatia ought to be so likewise. I will, there-



fore, that you persuade, and even compel, all the priests in Galatia to live soberly, otherwise do you depose them from the priestly office, unless they, and their wives, and children, and servants, do religiously worship the gods, and also forbear to converse with the servants, children, and wives of the Galileans, who are impious towards the gods, and prefer impiety to religion. You are likewise to order them not to frequent the theatre, nor to drink in taverns, nor to exercise any mean or sordid employments. Such as hearken to your directions, you are to encourage; others you are to reject. You are also to erect hospitals in every city, that strangers also may share in our humanity; and not only those of our own religion, but others likewise, if they are necessitous." He then tells him what allowance he had made for that purpose. "For," says he, "it is a shame when there are no beggars among the Jews, and the impious Galileans relieve not only their own people but ours also, that our poor should be neglected by us, and be left helpless and destitute."

"After all," says Julian, "these (Galileans) have in some degree a proper sense of religion, for they worship no abject and vulgar deity, but that God who is truly all-powerful and all good,



by whose direction the sensible world is conducted; the same I am persuaded that we also worship, under different names. They therefore seem to me to act very consistently, as they are not transgressors of the laws, but only err in paying their worship to this one God, in neglect of all the rest, and in thinking that we only, whom they style the Gentiles, are precluded from his influence."

These last are honourable testimonies to the spirit and influence of Christianity, which Julian, when he had a different object in view, has furnished. On the other hand, he is not able to produce any fact against the Christian religion. His misinterpretations can be easily refuted.

If the authenticity of the Scriptures be admitted, as we find they are by all these early opposers, nothing more is wanted from them. Their testimony is therefore valuable. They were the most learned and able early opponents which appeared against Christianity. Living near its origin, they had every opportunity of examining and making use of all the evidence that might appear against it. Yet what have they produced? Compelled *to admit the facts and the miracles*, they admit all that is wanted. It has been observed, that especially the Emperor Julian, with



the command of the whole Roman empire, had every means and opportunity, as he had the greatest inclination, to detect forgeries in the Gospel histories had there been any, or to bring forward opposing testimonies if any such existed. But, at the same time, it is also clear, that with the whole world on their side, the first opponents of Christianity, as Trypho the Jew, and Celsus the Epicurean, had likewise all means in their power to obtain any opposite facts or statements. And, from the nature of the case, the enmity of all men, and the interest all felt in suppressing the new religion, had such ever existed, they could not have been lost. Being the most effectual weapons, as well as the easiest wielded, they would have been eagerly laid hold off, and assuredly preferred to such flimsy reasonings, and attempts to prove contradictions, as have been quoted. It was not then want of evidence at that time more than now that prevented men from becoming Christians: It was the natural opposition of the carnal mind, which is enmity to God, and to which the things of God are foolishness. The supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, who, as Julian says, the Christians "will have it made the heaven and the earth," was, we see, a constant stumbling block to those heathen opposers; and is a to-



pic on which every one of them greatly insists. But in their opposition to it, we have pleasing and incontestible evidence of the firm and uniform judgment of the first Christians in respect to this point, which is the grand foundation and corner stone on which the whole revelation of God is built. "The Jews," says Paul, "require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."



## CHAP. VII.

*Testimony to facts recorded in the Gospel History, and to the progress of the Gospel by Jewish and Heathen Historians, and by the Public Edicts of the Roman Government.*

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**JOSEPHUS**, the Jewish historian, was contemporary with the Apostles, having been born in the year 37. From his situation and habits, he had every access to know all that took place at the rise of the Christian religion.

Respecting the founder of this religion, Josephus has thought fit to be silent in his History. The present copies of his work contain one passage which speaks very respectfully of Jesus Christ, and ascribes to him the character of the Messiah. But as Josephus did not embrace Christianity, and as this passage is not quoted or referred to till the beginning of the fourth century, it is, for these and other reasons, generally accounted spurious. It is also according to the manner of Josephus, in other parts of his



History, to pass over in silence what appeared to make against his nation. When he wrote, the Christian religion had made considerable progress, and every thing respecting it must have been well known to him. He had therefore no middle way. It was necessary either to enter somewhat particularly into the subject, or to pass it over entirely. To have mentioned it, as is done in the passage in question, would have been to condemn himself. His testimony, then, to Christianity is found in his silence; and especially as he was a priest, is abundantly strong. Not having embraced the Christian religion, and, at the same time, being unable to contradict the facts on which it was founded, or to set them aside, he passes it quietly by. The minute description he has given of the other religious sects in Judea, fully proves that his silence was that of design, to which his circumstances compelled him.

His account, however, of the civil and religious affairs of Judea, of the Princes and Rulers who governed the nation, of the situations of places, of the customs of the country, and of the manners of the people, is perfectly agreeable to the representation of these things which we have in the Gospels. In addition to this, he has gi-



ven a decided testimony to the appearance of John the Baptist, and also an account of his being put to death by Herod. The reason he assigns for his execution is different from that given by the sacred historian; but as to the fact, there is an entire coincidence between them. His words are—"Some of the Jews thought Herod's army was destroyed of God, he being justly punished for the slaughter of John, who was surnamed the Baptist. For Herod had put that good man to death, although he exhorted the Jews, after having exercised virtue and righteousness towards one another, and having performed the duties of piety towards God, to come to baptism. For thus baptism would be acceptable to him, not if they abstained from some sins only, but if, to purity of body, they joined a soul first cleansed by righteousness. But when many gathered round him, for they were much pleased with the hearing of such discourses, Herod, fearing lest the people, who were greatly under the influence of his persuasion, might be carried to some insurrection, (for they seemed to do nothing but by his counsel,) judged that it might be better to seize him before any insurrection was made, and to take him off, than, after affairs were disturbed, to repent of his negligence.



Thus he, by the jealousy of Herod, being sent bound to Machærus, was there put to death; and the Jews thought, that, on account of the punishment of this person, destruction had befallen the army, God being displeased with Herod." In this passage, Josephus attests John's preaching and baptism, and the general attention which his ministry attracted, as well as his being put to death by Herod.

UNDER the Roman government, it was customary for governors of provinces to send to the Emperor an account of remarkable transactions in the places where they resided. Referring to this custom, Eusebius says,—“ Our Saviour's resurrection being much talked of throughout Palestine, Pilate informed the Emperor of it, as likewise of his miracles, which he had heard of, and that, being raised up after he had been put to death, he was already believed by many to be a God.” These accounts were never made public, nor were any similar ones likely to be published, as such accounts were intended for only the information of government. Augustus forbade publishing the acts of the senate. But the above fact is attested by Justin Martyr in his first Apology, which, in the year 140, was presented to the



Emperor Antoninus Pius and the senate of Rome. Having mentioned the crucifixion of Jesus, and some of the circumstances of it, he adds—"And that these things were so done, you may know from the acts made in the time of Pontius Pilate." Tertullian, in his Apology, about the year 198, having spoken of our Saviour's crucifixion and resurrection, his appearances to his disciples, and his ascension to heaven in the sight of the same disciples, who were ordained by him to preach the Gospel over the world, goes on—"Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate, in his conscience a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then Emperor."

In another part of the same Apology, he speaks to this purpose: "There was an ancient decree, that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved of by the senate. Tiberius, in whose time the Christian religion had its rise, having received from Palestine in Syria an account of such things as manifested our Saviour's divinity, proposed to the senate, and giving his own vote as first in his favour, that he should be placed among the gods. The senate refused, because he had himself declined that honour. Nevertheless, the Emperor persisted in his own opinion, and ordered, that if any accused the Christians they should be punished."



These testimonies are taken from public Apologies for the Christian religion, presented, or proposed and recommended, to the Emperor and senate of Rome, or to magistrates of public authority and great distinction in the Roman empire.

TACITUS, the Roman historian, was born in the year 61 or 62. He was Prætor of Rome under Domitian in 88, and Consul in the short reign of Nerva in 97. In giving an account of the great fire at Rome in the 10th of Nero, about thirty years after our Lord's ascension, he says—"To suppress, therefore, this common rumour," (viz. that the Emperor himself had set fire to the city,) "Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishments upon those people who were in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. They had their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, the source of this evil, but reached the city also, whither flow from all quarters all things vile and shameful, and where they find shelter and encouragement. At first, they only



were apprehended who confessed themselves of that sect ; afterwards a vast multitude, discovered by them : all which were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity to mankind. Their executions were so contrived as to expose them to derision and contempt. Some were covered over with the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs ; some were crucified ; others, having been daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night time, and thus burnt to death. Nero made use of his own gardens as a theatre upon this occasion, and also exhibited the diversions of the circus, sometimes standing in the crowd as a spectator, in the habit of a charioteer ; at other times driving a chariot himself, till at length these men, though really criminal, and deserving exemplary punishment, began to be commiserated as people who were destroyed, not out of a regard to the public welfare, but only to gratify the cruelty of one man."

Such is the testimony of Tacitus, who lived in the same age with the Apostles, to the principal facts which relate to the origin of the Gospel, as well as to its rapid progress. He here attests that Jesus Christ was put to death as a malefactor, by Pontius Pilate, procurator under



Tiberius; that, from Christ, the people called Christians took their name; that this religion had its rise in Judea; that thence it was propagated into other parts of the world, as far as Rome, where Christians were very numerous; and that they were reproached and hated, and underwent many and grievous sufferings.

SUETONIUS, another eminent Roman historian, was born about the year 70. He says, in his History of the Life of the Emperor Claudius, who reigned from the year 41 to 54, that "he banished the Jews from Rome, who were continually making disturbances, Chrestus being their leader." The first Christians being of the Jewish nation, were for a while confounded with the rest of that people, and shared in the hardships that were imposed on them. This account, however, attests what is said in the Acts of the Apostles, (xviii. 2,) that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome, when Aquila and Priscilla, two Jewish Christians, were compelled to leave it. In the life of Nero, whose reign began in 54, and ended in 68, Suetonius says, "The Christians too were punished with death: a sort of people addicted to a new and mischievous superstition."

On the foregoing passage of Tacitus, and in



reference to the persecution of the Christians under Nero, Gibbon remarks, "The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians."

In this persecution Paul is said to have been beheaded.

THE reign of the Emperor DOMITIAN, under whom the second persecution of the Christians took place, began in the year 81, and terminated in the year 96. Domitian made inquiry after the posterity of David, and two men were brought before him of that family. "At that time," says Hegesippus, "there were yet remaining of the kindred of Christ the grandsons of Jude, who was called his brother according to the flesh. These some accused as being of the race of David, and Evocatus brought them before Domitianus Cæsar; for he too was afraid of the coming of the Christ, as well as Herod." Of these men, Mr Gibbon says, "They frankly confessed their royal origin, and their near relation to the Messiah; but they disclaimed any temporal views, and professed that his kingdom, which they de-



voutly expected, was purely of a spiritual and angelic nature. When they were examined concerning their origin and occupation, they shewed their hands, hardened with daily labour, and declared that they derived their whole subsistence from the cultivation of a farm near Cocaba, of the extent of about 24 English acres, and of the value of three hundred pounds sterling. The grandsons of St Jude were dismissed with compassion and contempt."

DURING the third persecution, which began in the year 100, in the third year of the Emperor TRAJAN, the younger Pliny was appointed proconsul of Bithynia, a province of the Roman empire, on the Euxine Sea. In that distant country there were now vast numbers of Christians, against whom the proconsul, according to the Emperor's edict, used great severity. Being desirous of more full information how to proceed against the Christians, and "being moved," as Eusebius says, "at the multitude of those who were slain for the faith," he wrote the following letter to Trajan, in the year 107, which was formerly noticed, and in the same year received the Emperor's rescript.

"Pliny, to the Emperor Trajan, wisheth health and happiness. It is my constant custom, sir, to



refer myself to you, in all matters concerning which I have any doubt. For who can better direct me where I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of Christians; so that I know not well what is the subject-matter of punishment or of inquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made upon account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike; whether repentance should entitle to pardon, or whether all who have once been Christians ought to be punished, though they are now no longer so; whether the name itself, although no crimes be detected, or crimes only belonging to the name, ought to be punished. Concerning all these things I am in doubt.

“ In the mean time I have taken this course with all who have been brought before me, and have been accused as Christians. I have put the question to them, Whether they were Christians? Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be punished; for it was no doubt with me, whatever



might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. There were others of the same infatuation, whom, because they are Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the city.

“ In a short time, the crime spreading itself, even whilst under persecution, as is usual in such cases, divers sorts of people came in my way. An information was presented to me, without mentioning the author, containing the names of many persons, who, upon examination, denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so; who repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which, for that purpose, I had caused to be brought and set before them, together with the statues of the deities. Moreover they reviled the name of Christ, none of which things, as is said, they who are really Christians can by any means be compelled to do. These, therefore, I thought proper to discharge.

“ Others were named by an informer, who at first confessed themselves Christians, and afterwards denied it; the rest said they had been Christians, but had left them some three years ago, some longer, and one or more above 20 years. They all worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods;



—these also reviled Christ. They affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together, on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God; and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a meal, which they ate in common, without any disorder; but this they had forborne since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies.

“After receiving this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maid-servants, which were called ministers. But I have discovered nothing beside a bad and excessive superstition.

“Suspending therefore all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared unto me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially upon account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages, and every rank, of both



sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented. And the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are every where bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of men might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to those who shall repent."

To the above letter, the Emperor Trajan sent the following answer :

" Trajan to Pliny, wisheth health and happiness.

" You have taken the right method, my Pliny, in your proceedings with those who have been brought before you as Christians ; for it is impossible to establish any one rule that shall hold universally. They are not to be sought for. If any are brought before you, and are convicted, they ought to be punished. However, he that denies his being a Christian, and makes it evident in fact, that is, by supplicating to our gods, though he be suspected to have been so formerly,



let him be pardoned upon repentance. But in no case, of any crime whatever, may a bill of information be received, without being signed by him who presents it; for that would be a dangerous precedent, and unworthy of my government."

In the above letters, we have a public and authentic attestation to the amazing growth of the Christian religion, which had made such progress in the remote country of Bithynia, that the pagan temples were, according to Pliny, "almost forsaken;" he also mentions that there had been Christians in that country twenty years before. Their blameless lives, the purity of their religious worship, their obedience to their civil rulers, in giving up what they did not consider to be enjoined by Divine authority, and their fortitude in suffering, and steady perseverance in the faith of Christ, are all unequivocally attested by their persecutors.

The Emperor ADRIAN was born in the year 76. He reigned 20 years from the death of Trajan, in 117. Trajan's edict being still in force against the Christians, they suffered persecution under Adrian's reign, although he published no new edict against them. Upon occasion, however, of the apologies which Quadratus and Aris-



tides presented to him at Athens in the year 126, that persecution was moderated. Of Aristides, Jerome says, "he was a most eloquent Athenian philosopher, and in his former habit he presented to the Emperor Adrian, at the same time with Quadratus, a book containing an account of our sect, that is an apology for the Christians, which is still extant, a monument with the learned of his ingenuity." This apology is now lost. To Quadratus was ascribed the gift of prophecy, and he is said to have been "a disciple of the Apostles." The following is all that remains of the apology which he presented to Adrian. "The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real, both they that were healed, and they that were raised from the dead; who were seen not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterwards; nor only whilst he dwelt on this earth, but also after his departure, and for a good while after it, in so much that some of them have reached to our times."

We are informed by Eusebius, that "Serenius Granianus, proconsul, wrote to the Emperor Adrian, that it seemed to him unjust that the Christians should be put to death, only to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial." The apologies of Aristides and Quadratus, presented about the same time with the above letter, ap-



pear to have contributed to procure the following favourable rescript from the Emperor Adrian.

“ Adrian to Manucius Fundanus: I have received a letter written to me by the illustrious Sere-nius Granianus, whom you have succeeded. It seems then to me, that this is an affair which ought not to be passed over without being examined into, if it were only to prevent disturbance being given to people, and that you may not be left for informers to practise their wicked arts. If, therefore, the people of the province will appear publicly, and in a legal way charge the Christians, that they may answer for themselves in court, let them take that course, and not proceed by importunate demands and loud clamours only. For it is much the best method if any bring accusations, that you should take cognizance of them. If, then, any one shall accuse and make out any thing contrary to the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime; but, by Hercules, if the charge be only a calumny, do you take care to punish the author of it with the severity it deserves.”

In the above rescript, Trajan's edict is not repealed; according to which, if a man was accused and proved to be a Christian, a President is required to punish him, unless he recant. But



in a considerable degree, this rescript was favourable to the Christians. And the persecution, which before had been violent, was now restrained and moderated.

Besides the rescript, there is a letter of Adrian to Servianus, (husband of Paulina, the Emperor's sister), who was consul in the year 134. "Adrian Augustus, to the consul Servianus, wisheth health. I have found Egypt, my dear Servianus, which you commended to me, all over fickle and inconstant, and continually shaken by the slightest reports of fame. The worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and they are devoted to Serapis, who call themselves Christ's bishops. There is no ruler of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, no mathematician, no soothsayer, no anointer, even the patriarch, if he should come to Egypt, would be required by some to worship Serapis, by others Christ. A seditious and turbulent sort of men. However, the city is rich and populous. Nor are any idle; some are employed in making glass, others paper, others in weaving linen. They have one God; him the Christians, him the Jews, him all the Gentile people worship."

It is not surprising that in the above letter the Christians in Egypt, as to their worship, and in



other respects, are confounded with the other Egyptians. But the inaccuracy of the representation in these things does not invalidate the general fact, which the Emperor here authenticates, that the Christians, within a century after the resurrection of Jesus, were so numerous throughout Egypt.

ANTONINUS surnamed the Pious, succeeded Adrian in the year 138. To this Emperor, Justin Martyr presented at Rome his first apology in the year 140. It is inscribed in this manner. "To the Emperor Titus Ælius Adrianus Antoninus the Pious, and to his son Verissimus and Lucius, and the Senate, and all the people of the Romans, in behalf of men gathered out of all nations, who are unjustly hated and ill treated, I, Justin, son of Priscus, son of Bacchius, one of them of the city of Flavia Neapolis, in that part of Syria which is called Palestine, making this address and supplication." The following are the concluding words of this apology: "On the day called Sunday we all meet together; on which day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead; on the day before Saturday he was crucified; and on the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, he appeared to his Apostles and disciples, and taught them those things which we



have set before you, and refer to your consideration. If these things appear agreeable to reason and truth, pay a regard to them; if they appear trifling, reject them as such; but do not treat as enemies, nor appoint capital punishment to those who have done no harm; for we foretel unto you that you will not escape the future judgment of God if you persist in unrighteousness; and we shall say, the will of the Lord be done."

The copy of an edict said to be presented to the states in Asia, in consequence of the above and other representations from Christians, is still extant. It contains a strong testimony in favour of the Christians; but as its genuineness is doubted by some, it is here omitted, as well as every thing among these early testimonies, of whose genuineness there is the smallest doubt.

MARCUS ANTONINUS the philosopher, succeeded Antoninus Pius as Emperor, in the year 161. There is still extant a book written by him called his "Meditations." In the eleventh book, the following passage occurs, in which he mentions the Christians. "What a soul is that which is prepared, even now presently, if needful, to be separated from the body, whether it be to be extinguished, or to be dispersed, or to subsist still. But this readiness must proceed from a



well weighed judgment, not from mere obstinacy like the Christians. And it should be done considerately, and with gravity, without tragical exclamations, and so as to persuade another."

The foregoing passage contains an attestation to the fortitude of the Christians who lived in the age next to the Apostles, grounded on the assured conviction of the truth of that religion for which they suffered so much. The Emperor was a bigot in religion and in philosophy; and nothing but his prejudice against Christianity can account for his condemning that fortitude which he ought to have approved.

He ascribes the willingness of the Christians to die to obstinacy, and says, that "a man ought to resign life only upon a well formed judgment, and considerately." But did not the Christians die in this manner? He says, "it should be done with gravity, without tragical exclamations," upon which it has been observed, that "it is not a little strange that a Stoic, whose writings are full of affectation, and are all over tragical, should blame the Christians for not dying without tragical noise and exclamation. If they then called upon God and Christ; if they then exhorted their brethren to constancy and perseverance; if they expressed a



contempt of this world and its fading enjoyments; if they spake in sublime strains of the felicities of the world to come; in a word, if they triumphed in death, as some of them did, there is nothing in it absurd or unreasonable, nothing but what is truly admirable. The heathen people around them wanted nothing to make them sensible of it but a better knowledge of the Christian principles; such a persuasion of the boundless power and goodness of the One God, creator of all, and a well grounded expectation of eternal life." It will be recollected, that the great persecution against the churches at Lyons and Vienne in France, some account of which has been given already, took place under this Emperor, who therefore ought not to have spoken in this manner of the sufferings of the Christians.

Marcus's expressions denote great uncertainty concerning a future state of existence. He is doubtful whether the soul, when separated from the body, shall be "extinguished or dispersed, or shall still subsist." He says again, "To what purpose all this? . . . . You have made your voyage, and arrived at your port. Go ashore; if into another life, the gods are there; if into a state of insensibility, you will be no longer distracted by



pains and pleasures, nor be in subjection to this mean vessel."

Such was the amount of the speculations of Heathen philosophers respecting a future state; yet, with but few exceptions, they went hand in hand in violently opposing that Gospel, which, presenting to all who will take the trouble to examine it, the most indubitable evidence of its divine original, has brought life and immortality to light.

To trace this chain of evidence any further, would be superfluous. Nothing can be more fully authenticated than what has been brought forward on this head; all of which so forcibly reminds us of what Paul said before King Agrippa, — "*This thing was not done in a corner.*"



## CHAP. VIII.

*Testimony to the Messiah from the Success of the Gospel.*  

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WHEN Jesus Christ first set up his claim to the character of the Messiah, the difficulties of the work he proposed, on the one hand, and the means he employed to surmount them, on the other, seem entirely disproportionate. The object was, to supersede the Jewish economy; to subvert the established religions of all other nations, supported, as they everywhere were, not only by the civil power, but also by the most deeply rooted prejudices; to overthrow all those favourite systems which the pride of philosophy had so industriously reared; to change, in short, the whole religious and moral state of the world. A more stupenduous and difficult undertaking could not have been contemplated. To form a proper idea of this work, and of the testimony which its accomplishment affords to the divine



character of the Messiah, it is necessary to view it more closely.

Polytheism had been established in the world for many ages, and the body of the people everywhere, except the Jews, were firmly attached to it. Something in the prospect of death, and of a future state, is necessary to support the human mind, unless being sophisticated and misled by some system of vain reasoning, it is steel-ed by infidelity. This much oftener happens to men in the higher ranks of life, who have received more education, than those who have not the same leisure. Having imbibed some fashionable system which flatters the pride of their hearts, and at the same time *sets them free from many troublesome restraints*, they often contrive to go on with tolerable ease, which, as the mind becomes more and more hardened by habit, will naturally increase. With those who are placed in the lower walks of life, this state of mind is not so common. Most of them, however, are satisfied with merely the outward form of the religion of the country in which they live, whatever it may be. But this, in general, they must have. And as inquiry is generally irksome, and as those who are satisfied with the outward form without its power, have taken their religion



entirely on trust, nothing inflames every passion of their minds to such violence as whatever brings their religious notions into doubt. In addition to this, the religion of Paganism being entirely suited to the carnal mind, it possessed many charms in the eyes of the people at large. The idolatrous sacrifices were attended with feasting to excess, and all kinds of sensual indulgence. It was not without strong temptation that the Israelites were so prone to leave the pure worship of God, and to mix with their heathen neighbours in their idolatries. Many who, ignorant of their own hearts, express surprise at the frequent apostacies of the people of Israel, are not aware of the strong temptation they had to join in such revels. When they had made the golden calf in the wilderness, and sacrificed to it, it is said, "the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." With the highest indignation, then, would the mass of the people among Pagan idolaters view the introduction of the Christian religion, which at once went to overthrow their religion, and to annihilate their favourite revels and sports.

The pride of the higher classes, on the appearance of Christianity, would also be alarmed. An exclusive religion, which required unqualified



submission, very ill suited their general habits. Besides, as the established religion was the main engine among them for governing the people, they would be ready to fear that if it were destroyed, their authority would be diminished. The men of the world, who “cared for none of these things,” would be enraged at this intrusion, and the disturbance which the new principles of this religion could not fail to excite. The sensualist, intent on his pleasures, would detest a system which made no composition with his lusts, and denounced the severest punishment on account of actions to which he had never heard the slightest blame attached. From the whole body of the Pagan priesthood, their office, their credit, and their gains, being all at stake, the most decided opposition might with certainty be expected; while the philosophers, however they might disagree among themselves, would firmly unite against a religion, which, exposing their “vain philosophy,” went to cut up all their systems root and branch; which pointedly declared, that, professing themselves to be wise, they had become fools; which exposed their vanity and selfishness, and which depicted their immorality, in common with that of all the rest of the Pagan



world, in colours of the deepest die. In addition to all this, the teachers of this new doctrine were Jews, who were abhorred and despised by the other nations. The violent and determined opposition, then, which the Christian religion must necessarily encounter from the whole united body of the Heathen world, is sufficiently manifest.

If this must be its reception from the Gentile nations, what must it meet with from the Jews? The Jews were in possession of the oracles of God: theirs was the true religion, confirmed by the most indubitable proofs; so that the conviction of its divine origin was rivetted on their minds. As, however, that religion was veiled under an outward form of ceremonies, instituted for the purpose of acting as a barrier against idolatry, and to shadow forth a more spiritual dispensation connected with it, the body of that people clung to that form; and, except "a small remnant" of the true worshippers of God, were as carnal in their hearts as their heathen neighbours.

But, however grossly they misunderstood the object of the Mosaic dispensation, as was proved when the Messiah appeared, still all of them had a firm persuasion that it was of divine appoint-



ment. They could trace its origin from the days of Abraham, through a space of 2000 years, and were possessed of a distinct written record from that period of the revelations which had been made, and of all the privileges which their forefathers had enjoyed. In the strongest manner, too, they cherished the flattering idea, that, being chosen as the depositories of the oracles of God, their nation was to continue in the exclusive possession of so great a privilege. They were plainly told, indeed, that it was not on account of their superior goodness or worth, in any respect, that they had been thus singled out; and their own Scriptures, from the very beginning, contained intimations, that the blessing which God in mercy intended for all was to flow through them to other nations, who were consequently at length to participate in the same privileges. Of this also the most express information was from time to time given by their prophets; yet all this was disregarded by them, and against every idea of the kind they entertained the most inveterate prejudice.

A priesthood, besides, consisting of a whole tribe, had been appointed from the time of their leaving Egypt, (a period of about 1500 years,) which possessed much power, and many valuable



privileges. In the Jewish theocracy, there was no separation between what is called church and state. The civil and religious parts of their constitution were not merely in union one with another; they were actually identified. The civil authority then, and the religious superintendence, were inseparable. The one could not exist for a moment without the other. But the appearance of the Messiah was at once to bear testimony to the divine mission of Moses, and to terminate that dispensation. This would of course abolish the priesthood, change the government, and put an end to the exclusive privileges of the Jewish nation.

The reception, then, which the Messiah would meet with when he appeared, might be easily anticipated. The Prophets gave many and faithful warnings of this. "Who," says one of them, "hath believed our report?"—"When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men." Accordingly, except that "small remnant" among the Jews, "who were looking for the consolation of Israel," without whom, the same Prophet declared, they would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah, the expectation and the hopes of all the rest were fixed on the appearance of an earthly conqueror.



If, then, the opposition of the Pagan world to the religion of Jesus Christ, on the grounds before described, might be apprehended to be great, that of the Jewish people would be tenfold. And so, in effect, it turned out, both in its violence and in its continuance, even to this day. No sooner did Jesus Christ appear among them, pointed out as the Messiah by the inquiry for him of strangers from the East, and by the time and place of his birth, than Herod the King “was alarmed, and *all Jerusalem with him;*” and it was only by flight that his life was saved. After he came forward in his public character, the rulers immediately combined against him; and, in proportion as he more clearly advanced his claim as the King of Israel, the more decided and avowed did their opposition become. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, the most opposite and hostile sects, were at once reconciled and united against him; even Herod and Pontius Pilate were made friends.

It may be said, however, did not “the common people hear him gladly?” Did he not himself say, “Blessed are ye poor?” It was indeed the distinguishing characteristic of the reign of the Messiah, (in this as in every other respect entirely dissimilar to the maxims and practice of the Heathen



philosophers,) that to the poor the Gospel was preached. To them much and peculiar attention is ever displayed throughout the whole of the Scriptures. They, too, have fewer external hindrances than the rich, to prevent them from listening to the word of life. In this respect, the situation of persons in the higher classes of society is generally much to be deplored. From a greater degree of fostered pride of understanding, from the entanglement of connections by which they are more fettered, and from punctilious forms, to which they are so much enslaved, the difficulties to them are exceedingly increased. Jesus himself taught, that certain situations in life have a greater tendency to harden, to blind, and to seduce the human heart, than others. But the natural enmity of the mind to God is not affected by circumstances of life; it is exerted in every condition. The Gospel does not flatter men in any situation. The state of human nature is such, that it cannot be rectified by any combination of outward circumstances. The highest cultivation of learning, or the greatest simplicity of ignorance,—the lowest or the loftiest station in which a man may be placed, can effect no radical change of heart; not even the smallest approach to it. It requires



another remedy, which, applied by the powerful influence of the Spirit of God, can alone effect the change, and under no circumstances whatever does that fail. No man, then, is blessed because he is poor, any more than because he is rich. Jesus indeed says, "Blessed are ye poor." But either he was immediately addressing and referring to his disciples, who were poor and blessed indeed, or he more shortly and parabolically expresses what he fully and plainly declares in the parallel passage, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Keeping these remarks in view, let us observe how the body of the people in Judea actually did receive Jesus Christ, and what difference there was between their conduct and that of their rulers. The rulers, from the very first, felt their situation, and perceived their danger if Jesus should be acknowledged by them. Accordingly their opposition from the beginning was decided. The people, on the other hand, had not power or consequence to lose, and were therefore much less susceptible of alarm. From their situation, too, they had better access, without exciting the jealousy of their friends and connections, to witness the miracles of the Messiah. And when in these they observed the exertion of that power which



he actually possessed, they were convinced that nothing could oppose him. Not doubting, therefore, that he was able to fulfil all their expectations of conquest, they vehemently desired to make him a king. When at any time, however, they discovered something of that spiritual doctrine which, under figures and parables, he all along taught, in every instance they were offended.

At the very opening of his ministry in Nazareth, when, in the language of the prophet, he disclosed the beneficent purposes of his mission, but still veiled, in a measure, under a view of temporal good things, the people who heard him were at first struck with admiration. But when he proceeded to remind them of the sovereign will of God, in respect to their exclusive privileges, such a tumult was instantaneously excited, that he was obliged by miracle to deliver himself from them. When again, under the figurative expression of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he intimated the nature of that spiritual life which must be derived from him, and the sovereign manner in which it was dispensed, many, even of those who had professed to be his disciples, "withdrew, and walked no more with him." Still, however, the hopes of the body of



the people were in a measure kept up. The raising of Lazarus from the dead, just before he went to Jerusalem for the last time, produced a very powerful effect, and a multitude of the people accompanied him into Jerusalem, with loud acclamations. Upon that occasion he took authoritative possession of the temple, and there publicly wrought miracles. This still supported the expectation of the multitude, and the rulers were so much aware of the prevailing spirit, that they feared to lay hands on him. But when the event of his being seized sooner than they intended, was, by a concurrence of circumstances, brought about,—when the people once observed that he had quietly submitted to the power of their rulers, his followers dispersed, and himself arraigned at their bar,—when they saw him condemned by the Roman government, and still no appearance of resistance made, they at once lost all hopes. The rulers had now no more reason to “fear the people.” Although the city was then crowded, the Jews being collected at the passover from all quarters, he was, without danger, led out openly to execution; while the violent exclamations of the enraged and disappointed multitude resounded from every quarter, “Away with him, away with him! Crucify him, crucify him!”



The scene that followed, and those alarming events which accompanied his death, appear indeed, at the time, to have softened and overawed the hearts of many ; but they produced no decisive effect. And, on the whole, such as is above described was, with a few exceptions, the unanimous voice of rulers and people among the Jews, when they came properly to apprehend how the mission and religion of Jesus Christ bore upon them, and to see in his death an end of their worldly expectations. Nearly the same scene was acted over again when his resurrection was proclaimed, and his disciples wrought miracles in attestation of it. From the first the rulers opposed.—The multitude wavered, and kept them in awe ; but at length, as matters came to be better understood, the persecution of his followers began, in which all went hand in hand ; and that opposition was commenced by the body of the Jewish nation, rich and poor, in which they have persevered to this day.

This general opposition of all ranks of persons, was strikingly displayed in the whole history of the Apostle Paul. And, upon occasion of his addressing them from the stairs of the castle, and informing them of the commands he had received from his Master, to go and preach to the Gen-



tiles, the people “cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live.”

What has been said will likewise account for the reception of John the Baptist. The rulers were also shy of him—his appearance and doctrine not bespeaking any thing very favourable to them. The multitude thronged to him, and to the last were not disappointed. His message was, “the kingdom of God is at hand ;” but it did not then clearly appear to them what kind of kingdom that was ; and the general hopes of the people, during the whole course of his ministry, do not seem to have failed.

Let the attitude then, in which the Jewish nation and the Pagan world stood at the coming of the Messiah, be considered, and let us next observe the instruments and means which were provided by Jesus to encounter this opposition, to withstand its power, and to subdue its force.

The depressed circumstances in which the Messiah first appeared in the world, gave no indication of future greatness. He was indeed lineally descended from the Jewish kings ; but the family in which he was born had fallen into very obscure circumstances. He was the “branch grown



out of the roots of Jesse," by which expression some understand the low situation to be intimated in which he was born. At any rate, while every thing respecting him was truly great, all that was external seemed entirely the reverse. His want of the advantages of education, corresponded to his outward circumstances. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" was at a very early period objected to him. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." Such was the situation in which the leader in the great work of changing the religion of the world appeared.

The associates whom he chose as the instruments of his design, corresponded to this situation. They consisted of a few fishermen from the despised district of Galilee, and a publican. These he named his Apostles, with whom he was to encounter all the learning and power of the Jewish priesthood and government, and whom he was afterwards to send forth to make known his name, and to extend his kingdom to the uttermost bounds of the earth. A more apparently unpromising preparation for such a purpose cannot be conceived. The natural disqua-



fications of these men, without any advantages of education, possessed of no knowledge of the world, and who, from their habits, were little prepared to embrace such enlarged views, seemed to preclude every idea of success. In this stage of the business, had any one seen them, arrayed in their usual attire, speaking the provincial dialect of their obscure district, a few "unlearned and ignorant men," and had the plan that was proposed been unfolded to him, what must have been his astonishment?

The total improbability of success seemed to be equally apparent, if the means which these men were to employ were considered. The doctrine they were to preach was directly opposed to the prejudices of men of every nation, and of every description. The doctrine of a crucified Saviour is aptly characterised by themselves, to be "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." According to the Mosaic law, a man hanged on a tree was to be reckoned accursed of God; and, among the Romans, crucifixion was the most degrading punishment; and no man but a slave, as well as a criminal, could be subjected to it. Yet from this doctrine of the cross, they were not for one moment to swerve. In declaring it, whatever opposition



they might meet with, they were "to give way by subjection, no not for an hour." The truth which this doctrine implied of human depravity, was inseparable from it. It charged home guilt upon every man without exception. It enforced upon all, without distinction, the necessity of pardon through the atonement, of unqualified submission to every part of it, and of totally relinquishing every other mode of worship, and every other ground of hope of acceptance with God. The whole of this was sure to encounter at once the pride and opposition of the human heart. If these messengers to the nations did not perceive all the difficulties at first, they soon experienced them. They found the whole world in arms against them. The indignation of the haughty moralist, the fierce passions of the multitude, and the rage of the civil magistrate, were equally excited. They were compelled to flee from city to city; every where to encounter contempt and all sorts of indignities; and at last to lay down their lives, in suffering a cruel and ignominious death.

But the success of the undertaking has been great. No violence was used by his servants; not a drop of blood was shed by them; yet the prediction, that the Messiah should be "the light



of the Gentiles," has been fully verified; and their idols have been "cast to the moles and to the bats." "The Lord," said the prophet 700 years before the event, "will be terrible unto them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth, and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." And this change has been affected by fishermen and *Jews*. Within thirty years after the death of Christ, the Apostle Peter had addressed an Epistle to the believers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Within the same period, Paul had severally written to churches at Rome, at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Colosse, at Thessalonica, most of which places he had personally visited, as well as other great cities, as Athens and Antioch. In one of his Epistles, he declares that the Gospel had gone into "all the world," and had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven."

Let us take the account of the *extent* of the triumph of Christianity in the world, from the pen of an opponent, who will not be suspected of exaggeration on this point. "While (says Mr Gibbon) that great body" (the Roman Empire) "was invaded by open violence, or undermined



by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men; grew up in silence and obscurity; derived new vigour from opposition; and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in arts and learning, as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies, has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients."

The outward submission of the nations, according to the above description, has indeed gone far beyond the internal change, which, operating individually, has been more confined; and the uttermost and most barbarous parts of the earth have not yet been all subdued. But while its energy has not ceased, the work is *still progressive*; and by what has already been accomplished, we are enabled to judge of what shall yet be done.



But have the altars of paganism fallen, and have the deep corruptions of the human heart been assailed without any resistance being made? Did the Apostles succeed without a struggle, and triumph without an opponent? And, has no attempt been made to invalidate the character which their writings assume; rather, has not every stone been turned to discover some flaw? Besides outward violence, attempts have been made, from every possible quarter, with every weapon which genius and learning could supply. The attack has been continued for nearly eighteen centuries, from the rulers at Jerusalem, from Celsus the philosopher, and Julian the Emperor, down to the lowest writers of the present times. But all they have written and said, has only contributed to elucidate and to confirm those parts of Scripture which had not before been fully examined, or so well understood.

In assigning the *causes* of the success of the Gospel, Mr Gibbon presents us with what follows:—"Our curiosity is naturally prompted to enquire, by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth? To this enquiry, an obvious but satisfactory answer may be re-



turned, that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But as truth and reason seldom find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the wisdom of Providence frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purpose, we may still be permitted, though with becoming submission, to ask, not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary causes of the rapid growth of the Christian Church? It will perhaps appear, that it was most effectually forwarded and assisted by the five following causes: 1st, The inflexible, and if we may use the expression, the intolerent zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses. 2d, The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. 3d, The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church. 4th, The pure and austere morals of the Christians. 5th, The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually form-



ed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman Empire."

Nothing but the force of truth could have extorted such a solution of his difficulty on the point Mr Gibbon here handles, from so determined an opposer of the Gospel. It is true, that, in his discussion of the above causes, he does every thing in his power to warp, to confuse, to misrepresent, and to explain away their proper efficiency. But with all his art, and knowledge of history, and with all his mis-statements which have been again and again exposed, he has not been able to twist them so as entirely to serve his purpose. His first answer, under the cover of which he introduces his discussion, strikingly comprises the whole truth. There is much reality in his secondary causes, and not many objections can be made to them, although his reasoning on them is most insidious and false. His very improper application of the word "intolerant," in his first cause, cannot escape notice. It seems to be used much in the same way, and for the same purpose, as the words "*transgression*" and "violation" of the laws of nature in Mr Hume's Essay on Miracles.

Let any one now reflect on the difficulties of the undertaking we have been considering, on



the instruments and means by which these were to be overcome, and on the astonishing success with which it has been finally crowned : Let him then say if he can possibly account for that success without the interposition of Divine power. Admit the inspiration of the Apostles,—the constant superintendence and promised presence of their heavenly Master, with the miraculous power which attested the truth of their mission, and all is plain and follows naturally. Deny these ;—deny, for example, the miracles, and difficulties equal to that of the undertaking itself present themselves. “ If,” says Augustine, “ ye will not believe the miracles of the Apostles, ye must at least believe this miracle, that the world was by such instruments without miracles converted.” The *pretence* of working miracles may very safely be risked, where the object is to give credit to a religion already established, and where all the civil power concurs. But this was not the situation of the Apostles. Their miracles were to be performed, not to support confirmed systems of worship, but to set them aside. They must then have been real, or they could have effected nothing. No one was more sensible than the Apostles themselves of their own natural disqualifications for the service in which they were en-



gaged. "We," say they, speaking of the Gospel, "have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

They were sent out when the Roman empire, the strongest government that ever had been on earth, was at the zenith of its power, and when learning and philosophy were risen to their greatest height. Yet they triumphed over all. Then "was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing floors."

"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." The mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, was now made manifest to his saints. "Ye shall receive power," said Jesus to his Apostles, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be wit-



nesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I AM WITH YOU always, even unto the end of the world.”



## CHAP. IX.

*Facts recorded in the earlier parts of the Scripture History, cannot be disproved ; and are corroborated by Tradition.*

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A MULTITUDE of public facts, from the creation of the world down to a late period of its history, are detailed in the Scriptures. This circumstance, connected with their claim of infallibility, affords full opportunity for every species of attack, while it stakes their credit on the impossibility of an impression being effected. Assaults from various quarters have accordingly been made, but not in one instance with the smallest success. After an interval of nearly 3000 years, the people of God may still joyfully repeat to one another the triumphant exhortation of the Psalmist, “ Walk about Zion, and go round about



her: tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.—As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish it for ever.”

The three following topics are frequently urged against the veracity of the books of Moses.—The age of the world.—The varieties of the human species.—The original circumstances of mankind.

To prove that the world was formed at a much earlier period than Moses assigns for its creation, the bowels of the earth have been ransacked, and all the aids that can be derived from modern discoveries resorted to, but in vain. One absurd theory has been exploded after another, and no progress whatever has been made towards the detection of any mistake, on this point, in the Sacred writers.

In the Preface to “An Essay on the Theory of the Earth,” dated 1815, by M. Cuvier of Paris, who is styled one of the first philosophers of the age, the publisher says, “Although the Mosaic account of the creation of the world is an inspired writing, and consequently rests on evidence totally independent of human observation and experience, still it is interesting, and in many re-



spects important, to know that it coincides with the various phenomena observable in the mineral kingdom. The structure of the earth, and the mode of distribution of extraneous fossils or petrifications, are so many direct evidences of the truth of the Scripture account of the formation of the earth; and they might be used as proofs of its author having been inspired; because the mineralogical facts discovered by modern naturalists were unknown to the sacred historian. Even the periods of time, the six days of the Mosaic description, are not inconsistent with our theories of the earth."—"The deluge, one of the grandest natural events described in the Bible, is equally confirmed, with regard to its extent and the period of its occurrence, by a careful study of the various phenomena observed on and near the earth's surface. The age of the human race, also, a most important inquiry, is satisfactorily determined by an appeal to natural appearances; and the pretended great antiquity of some nations, so much insisted on by certain philosophers, is thereby shewn to be entirely unfounded."

On the other hand, how little progress has yet been made towards bringing any *proof* against the authenticity of the writings of Moses, from the various theories of the earth that have been



produced, may be learned from the following declaration of M. Cuvier himself. "The present period, with respect to the theory of the earth, bears some resemblance," he observes, "to that in which some philosophers thought that the heavens were formed of polished stone, and that the moon was no larger than the Peloponnesus." From this representation, we may learn how to estimate the opinions of those who, from their partial observations and fanciful theories, have concluded, that as the world has no appearance of having had a beginning, so there is no probability that it will have an end.

The following is an extract respecting the age of the world, from Watson's Letters to Gibbon, addressed, he says, "to a set of men who have picked up in their travels, or the writings of the Deists, a few flimsy objections against Christianity."—"I cannot help," he proceeds, "taking notice of an argument by which some philosophers have of late endeavoured to overturn the whole system of revelation; and it is the more necessary to give an answer to their objection, as it is become a common subject of philosophical conversation, especially amongst those who have visited the continent. The objection tends to invalidate, as is supposed, the authority of Moses, by



shewing that the earth is much older than it can be proved to be from his account of the creation, and the Scripture chronology. We contend, that six thousand years have not yet elapsed since the creation. And these philosophers contend, that they have indubitable proof of the earth's being at the least fourteen thousand years old ; and they complain that Moses hangs as a dead weight upon them, and blunts all their zeal for inquiry.

“ The Canonico Recupero, who, it seems, is engaged in writing the history of Mount Etna, has discovered a stratum of lava which flowed from that mountain, according to his opinion, in the time of the second Punic War, or about two thousand years ago ; this stratum is not yet covered with soil sufficient for the production of either corn or vines ; it requires, then, says the Canon, two thousand years at least, to convert a stratum of lava into a fertile field. In sinking a pit near *Jaci*, in the neighbourhood of Etna, they have discovered evident marks of seven distinct lavas, one under the other ; the surfaces of which are parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth ; now, the eruption which formed the lowest of these lavas, (if we may be allowed to reason, says the Canon, from analogy), flowed from the mountain at least fourteen thou-



sand years ago." To this it is replied : " In the first place, the Canon has not satisfactorily established his main fact, that the lava in question is the identical lava which Diodorus Siculus mentions to have flowed from Etna in the second Carthaginian war ; and, in the second place, it may be observed, that the time necessary for converting lavas into fertile fields must be very different, according to the different consistencies of the lavas, and their different situations, with respect to elevation or depression, to their being exposed to winds, rains, and to other circumstances ; just as the time in which the heaps of iron slag, (which resembles lava), are covered with verdure, is different at different furnaces, according to the nature of the slag, and situation of the furnace ; and something of this kind is deducible from the account of the Canon himself ; since the crevices of this famous stratum are really full of rich good soil, and have pretty large trees growing in them.

" But if all this should be thought not sufficient to remove the objection, I will produce the Canon an analogy in opposition to his analogy, and which is grounded on more certain facts. Etna and Vesuvius resemble each other in the causes which produce their eruptions, and



in the nature of their lavas, and in the time necessary to mellow them into soil fit for vegetation ; or if there be any slight difference in this respect, it is probably not greater than what subsists between different lavas of the same mountain. This being admitted, which no philosopher will deny, the Canon's analogy will prove just nothing at all, if we can produce an instance of seven different lavas, (with interjacent strata of vegetable earth), which have flowed from Mount Vesuvius within the space, not of fourteen thousand, but of somewhat less than seventeen hundred years ; for then, according to our analogy, a stratum of lava may be covered with vegetable soil in about two hundred and fifty years, instead of requiring two thousand for the purpose. The eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, is rendered still more famous by the death of Pliny, recorded by his nephew in his letter to Tacitus ; this event happened in the year 79 ; it is not yet then quite seventeen hundred years since Herculaneum was swallowed up : but we are informed, by unquestionable authority, that " the matter which covers the ancient town of Herculaneum is not the produce of one eruption only ; for there are evident marks, that the matter of six



eruptions has taken its course over that which lies immediately above the town, and was the cause of its destruction. These strata are either of lava or burnt matter, *with veins of good soil betwixt them.*" I will not add another word on this subject, except that the bishop of the diocese was not much out in his advice to Canonico Recupero, to take care not to make his mountain older than Moses; though it would have been full as well to have shut his mouth with a reason, as to have stopped it with the dread of an ecclesiastical censure."

IN order to invalidate the truth of revelation, it has been earnestly contended that the human race is not descended from one pair. This, if it could be proved, would contradict the Mosaic account of the creation of man, and of the peopling of the earth, and the declaration of the Apostle, that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men." It also strikes at the root of the whole account of the entrance of sin and death through the first progenitor of mankind, and would equally invalidate the universality of the commission of the Apostles to proclaim the way of recovery to all nations through the righteousness of the second Adam. This attempt,



however, like the other respecting the age of the world, has proved abortive. Nothing that has been observed or advanced on the subject, goes at all to establish such an opinion.

The arguments used against the unity of the human race have all been shewn to be unfounded, and many of them ridiculous. The first and chief cause of its variety is proved, by an appeal to facts in every part of the world, to be *climate*; by which is meant, not so much the latitude of a country from the equator, as the degree of heat or cold, that depends on many connected circumstances. The next is the state of society, which greatly augments or corrects the influence of climate, and is itself the independent cause of many conspicuous distinctions among mankind. These causes, it has been shewn, may be infinitely varied in their degree, and in their combinations with other principles; and, in the innumerable migrations of mankind, they are modified by their own previous effects in a prior climate, and a prior state of society. \*

There is a colony of Jews at Cochin, upon the coast of Malabar, who are now as black as

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\* See Dr S. Smith's Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species.



the other Malabarians, who are hardly a shade lighter than the people of Guinea, Benin, or Angola.

IN opposition to the Mosaic account of the creation, and of the manner in which the earth was peopled, both at the beginning, and after the flood, it is often argued, and, by writers of a certain class, generally taken for granted, that "in the earliest periods of time, mankind, in every part of the globe, were in a state of absolute savagism."

This opinion forms the basis of a well known work, called "Sketches of the History of Man." To what is there advanced on the above subject, an answer, soon after its publication, appeared in "Two Letters on the Savage State," to which no reply was made. In the course of these letters, the following propositions are illustrated by a great number of particulars collected from ancient and modern history.

"The more populous and extensive kingdoms and societies were civilized at a period prior to the records of history: the presumption therefore is, that these were civilized from the beginning.

"No people who were once in a cultivated



state, and, in process of time, degenerated into the savage or barbarous state, have ever recovered their pristine condition, without foreign aid. This furnishes a presumptive argument, that man, once a savage, would never have raised himself from that hopeless state.

“ None of the nations which were savages or barbarians at the period of their first appearance in history, have ever been known to move one step forward towards a civilized state, till impelled by some external circumstance ; a phenomenon which does not seem to favour the progressive motion of the human species towards a state of civilization.

“ There appears in savages a natural and rooted aversion to a civilized state. This furnishes a strong presumption, that, by the efforts of their natural genius alone, they never would have raised themselves above their original character.

“ The most judicious and the most enlightened sages of antiquity entertained the most exalted notions of the piety, virtue, wisdom, and justice of the primitive men.—If we can depend upon their opinion, there must always have existed, in some region of the globe, a society of civilized people.

“ The idea of a state of universal savagism



seems to have sprung from the chimerical cosmogonies of Mochus, Democritus, Epicurus, &c. These cosmogonies, nor the consequences of them, were ever admitted by the wise and sober sects of philosophers.

“ The notion of a *golden age*, which at one time *universally* prevailed, is inconsistent with the universal extent of the empire of savagism.

“ There seems to be in human nature an innate propensity towards degeneracy, even in a state of the highest improvement. The consequence is obvious.

“ Civilization and improvements of every kind have always been carried to the highest pitch of perfection in large and populous societies. In savages, the social appetite never reaches beyond their own sept or horde, and consequently is too weak and too confined to dispose them to unite into large communities; and, of course, had all mankind been once in the savage state, they never could have arrived at any considerable degree of civilization.

“ In the earliest ages, all over the globe, we meet with names of persons, places, offices, dignities, alluding to, or formed from, names, epithets, attributes of the Deity, or, at least, from objects of religious worship. This appearance



indicates a devout turn of mind, and consequently a state of things greatly superior to that which is contended for by the gentlemen of your Lordship's party."

At the end of the first letter, the following challenge is given on the subject: "Upon the whole, I am persuaded your Lordship would oblige not a few of your unlearned readers, as well as myself, would you be condescending enough *to point out some ONE state, nation, or society*, which was once confessedly composed of savages, and did actually, without foreign assistance of any kind, by the gradual exertion of its internal powers, after passing successively through all the steps and stages specified in your Sketches, at length arrive at a state of complete humanity and civilization."

Not only has it proved impossible to overthrow any of the numerous facts which the Scriptures record, but, on the contrary, they are confirmed, in a very striking manner, by the traditional accounts of all nations.

In answer to Mr Hume's assertion, that the books of Moses are "corroborated by no concurring testimony," Dr Campbell replies—"As little, say I, invalidated by any *contradicting*



testimony ; and both for this plain reason, because there is no human composition that can be compared with this in respect of antiquity. But though this book is not corroborated by the concurrent testimony of any coeval histories, because if there ever were such histories they are not now extant, it is not therefore destitute of all collateral evidence. The following examples of this kind of evidence deserve some notice. The division of time into weeks, which hath obtained in many countries, for instance, among the Egyptians, Chinese, Indians, and northern barbarians, —nations whereof some had little or no intercourse with others, and were not even known by name to the Hebrews,—the tradition which in several places prevailed concerning the primeval chaos from which the world arose,—the production of all living creatures out of water and earth, by the efficiency of a Supreme Mind,—the formation of man last of all, in the image of God, and his being vested with dominion over the other animals,—the primitive state of innocence and happiness,—the subsequent degeneracy of mankind,—their destruction by a flood, and the preservation of one family in a vessel. Nay, which is still stronger, I might plead the vestiges of some such catastrophe as the deluge,



which the shells and other marine bodies that are daily dug out of the bowels of the earth, in places remote from the sea, do clearly exhibit to us. I might urge the traces, which still remain in ancient histories, of the migrations of people and of science from Asia, (which hath not improperly been styled *the cradle of the arts*) into many parts both of Africa and Europe. I might plead the coincidence of those migrations, and of the origin of states and kingdoms, with the time of the dispersion of the posterity of Noah."

Respecting the division of time into weeks, Dr C. remarks, "The judicious reader will observe, that there is a great difference between the concurrence of nations in the division of time into *weeks*, and their concurrence in the other periodical divisions, into *years*, *months*, and *days*. These divisions arise from such natural causes, as are every where obvious; the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun, and the revolution of the moon. The division into *weeks*, on the contrary, seems perfectly arbitrary; consequently, its prevailing in distant countries, among nations which had no communication with one another, affords a strong presumption, that it must have been derived from some tradition, (as that



of the creation) which hath been older than the dispersion of mankind into different regions."

To this last article may be added, that the whole of the fifteen southern constellations yield their testimony to the ten first chapters of Genesis. First, the constellation of the Ship: secondly, the Altar, with its vast body of fire and smoke ascending near the triangle, the remarkable Egyptian symbol of Deity: thirdly, the Sacrificer: fourthly, the Beast about to be sacrificed: fifthly, the Raven: sixthly, the Cup of libation: seventhly, eighthly, and ninthly, the greater and lesser Dog, and the Hare, situated so near to Orion, the great and iniquitous hunter both of men and beasts. The whole of the remaining constellations of the southern hemisphere are composed of aquatic objects or animals, and may be considered as pointedly allusive to a general deluge.

TRADITIONS more or less distinct, which corroborate the facts recorded by Moses, and which prove the common origin of mankind, are found, on the whole, to be uniform in all parts of the world. They have not only been verbally handed down, but have subsisted in the religious observances and practices of all nations. These are not confined to the old world, but extend



also to the new. The first discoverers of America observed there a reverence for the Sabbath, and an acquaintance with many of the appointments of the Mosaic institution, and of the early history of the world. "The contents of some of their manuscripts are curious in a high degree. One is a cosmogony, which contains a tradition of the mother of mankind having fallen from her first state of happiness and innocence; and she is generally represented as accompanied by a serpent. We find also the idea of a great inundation overwhelming the earth, from which a single family escaped on a raft. There is a history of a pyramidal edifice raised by the pride of men, and destroyed by the anger of the gods. The ceremony of ablution is practised at the birth of children. All these circumstances, and many more, led the priests who accompanied the Spanish army at the time of the conquest, to the belief, that at some very distant epocha, Christianity, or at least Judaism, had been preached in the new continent. I think, however, says Mr Humboldt, I may affirm, from the knowledge we have lately acquired of the sacred books of the Hindus, that, in order to explain the analogy of these traditions, we have no need to recur to the western part of Asia, since similar



traditions, of high and venerable antiquity, are found among the followers of Brama, and among the Shamans of the eastern Steppes of Tartary.”\*

The institution of sacrifice, which, to Mr Hume appeared absurd, and which certainly did not originate from what is called the light of nature, has been found in every part of the world.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been clearly traced through nearly all the Pagan nations of antiquity, and through the northern countries of Europe. It has prevailed throughout Asia, and is also distinctly found among the nations of America. In South America, they had three images of the sun, called APOMTI, CHURUNTI, and INTIQUAOQUI, which signify FATHER AND LORD SUN, the SON SUN, and the BROTHER SUN. In like manner, they named the three images of Chuquilla, which is the god that rules in the region of the air. In Cuquisaco, they worship a great idol, whom they call TONGATONGA, which signifies ONE IN THREE, and THREE IN ONE. In short, this is a doctrine extensively diffused through all nations; a doctrine established at once in regions so distant as Japan and Peru, immemorially

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\* Edinburgh Review, Nov. 1814. Humboldt's Researches.



throughout the whole extent of Egypt and India, and equally acknowledged in the mountains of Thibet and the vast deserts of Siberia.

Whether we consult the religion of the Greeks, the Goths, or the Hindoos, we every where meet with a mediatorial deity, engaged in combat with an envenomed serpent. And a belief that the place of punishment is full of serpents, equally pervades the Gothic, the Persian, and the Hindoo mythologies.\* Can any one imagine that such unlikely combinations, unaccountable except on the ground of a common descent and revelation from God, for instance, that of a Triune God, could have accidentally found a place among men originally separate, and remote from each other?

Traditions have been traced over the globe of the creation—of the Sabbath day—of Paradise—of the fall of man—of the serpent—of the promised Messiah—of Cain and Abel—of the longevity of the Patriarchs—of the number of generations between Adam and Noah—of the Deluge—of the dove sent out by Noah—of the rainbow as a sign—of the number of persons

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\* See Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, and Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*.



preserved in the ark—of Noah and his three sons—of the Tower of Babel—of Sodom and Gomorrah, with a variety of circumstances respecting these particulars.

The great tower in the temple of Belus at Babylon, is supposed to have been the same which was built there at the confusion of tongues. As described by Strabo, it was one of the most wonderful works in the world. Although it fell short of the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids, (which was a square of 700 feet on every side, while this was but of 600,) yet it far exceeded it in the height; the perpendicular measure of that pyramid being 481 feet, and that of the tower 600. It is particularly attested by several authors, to have been all built of bricks and bitumen, as the scriptures tells us the tower of Babel was. Herodotus says, that the going up to it was by stairs on the outside, round it. When Alexander took Babylon, Calisthenes the philosopher, who accompanied him thither, found they had astronomical observations for 1903 years backwards from that time; which carried up the account as high as the 115th year after the flood, which was within 15 years after the tower of Babel was built.



Concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, Tacitus relates, that a tradition still prevailed in his days, of certain powerful cities having been destroyed by thunder and lightning; and of the plain in which they were situated having been burnt up. He adds, that evident traces of such a catastrophe remained. This historian concludes with expressing his own belief in this awful judgment, derived from an attentive consideration of the country in which it was said to have happened. In a similar manner Strabo, after describing the nature of the lake Asphaltis, adds, that the whole of its appearance gives an air of probability to the *prevailing tradition*, that thirteen cities, the chief of which was Sodom, were once destroyed and swallowed up by earthquakes, fire, and an inundation of boiling sulphureous water.

The account which Lucian (a professed scoffer at all religions, who lived in the second century,) has given of the tradition of the flood, in his Dialogues, is as follows: Having visited the temple of Hierapolis, he says, "The popular story is, that this temple was founded by Deucalion, the Scythian, in whose time the great flood is said to have happened. I was no stranger to the account of it by the Greeks, which is as follows: 'Not one of us now



living is descended from the original race of men, who all perished ; and we, numerous as we are, are no other than a second race, sprung from Deucalion. The Aborigines, we are informed, were apt to be very arrogant, full of mischief, and continually transgressing the laws, inhospitable to strangers, deaf to supplications, and would say or swear any thing ; in which offences they were overtaken by the severity of justice. The earth on a sudden opened its sluices, heavy showers of rain came down, the rivers swelled, the sea rose till the waters every where prevailed, and every mortal was drowned except Deucalion alone, whose discretion and piety were such, that he was spared, and became the father of a new generation. Having a large chest, he put his wives and children in it, and then went into it himself ; which was no sooner done, than there came to him boars, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and in short every species of land animals, all in pairs. He took them all in ; and Jupiter had ordered it so, that they neither did him nor one another the least injury, but lived and sailed together in perfect harmony, during the continuance of the flood, all in the same chest.' This I was told by the Greeks. In addition to which, the Hierapolitans relate,



that a large chasm was provided in their country to absorb the water; and that Deucalion, after seeing it thus disposed of, raised altars, and built a temple to Juno, over the chasm. It was but a small hole in the earth when I saw it; but how much larger it might have been formerly, when it held so much, I cannot take upon me to say. However, as a proof of what they advance, water is brought twice in the year, from the sea to the temple, not only by the priests, but from the whole country far and near, by Syrians, Arabians, and great multitudes beyond the Euphrates. It is emptied in the temple, and runs into the opening below, which, small as it is, takes in such a quantity as is truly amazing. This it seems was a law of Deucalion, to perpetuate the memory of his deliverance from the general calamity."

Various Pagan historians speak of Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews: Diodorus Siculus calls him a man of most superior wisdom and courage. He mentions the departure of Israel from Egypt; of their advancing into Palestine, and seizing upon a number of cities, particularly Jerusalem. He speaks of their worship, their tribes, their code of laws, by which they were kept separate from every other people; of the priesthood appointed in one family; of judges, instead of kings, being ap-



pointed to decide all controversies among them, of the superior authority being vested in the chief priest; and that Moses concluded the volume of his laws, with claiming for them divine inspiration. Strabo also mentions various particulars respecting Moses. Eupolimus likewise celebrates him as being the first wise man, and the inventor of letters, which the Phœnicians received from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phœnicians.

In the decree issued by the magistrates of Pergamos, 44 years before Christ, there is the following passage: "Our ancestors were friendly to the Jews, even in the days of Abraham, who was the father of all the Hebrews, as we have also found it set down in our public records."

Josephus, as we have already noticed, appeals to the public records of different nations, and to a great number of books extant in his time, but now lost, as indisputable evidence in the opinion of the Heathen world, for the truth of the most remarkable events in the history of the people of Israel.

A copious history of the Jewish legislator is given by Artapanus, in which the oppression of the Israelites; the flight of Moses into Arabia, and his subsequent marriage; a circumstance si-



milar to that of the burning bush ; his Divine commission to deliver his countrymen ; the transformation of his rod into a serpent ; the various plagues of Egypt ; the spoiling of the Egyptians ; the passage through the Red Sea ; the destruction of Pharaoh and his host ; and the support of the Israelites by manna in the wilderness, are all mentioned. He is further said to have been the person whom the Greeks call Museus, the preceptor of the celebrated Orpheus. The same author asserts, that the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea was not unknown to the Heliopolitans, who gave the following account of that supernatural transaction. “ The king of Egypt, as soon as the Jews had departed from his country, pursued them with an immense army, bearing along with him the consecrated animals. But Moses having, by the divine command, struck the waters with his rod, they parted asunder, and afforded a free passage to the Israelites. The Egyptians attempted to follow them, when fire suddenly flashed in their faces, and the sea, returning to its usual channel, brought an universal destruction upon their whole army.”

The circumstance of the Egyptians being struck with lightning, as well as being overwhelmed by



the waves, is mentioned in the 77th Psalm, although unnoticed in the Pentateuch.

Diodorus Siculus relates, that the Ichthyophagi, who lived near the Red Sea, had a tradition handed down to them through a long line of ancestors, that the whole bay was once laid bare to the very bottom, the waters retiring to the opposite shores ; and that they afterwards returned to their accustomed channel with a most tremendous revulsion.

Even to this day, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Corondel preserve the remembrance of a mighty army having been once drowned in the bay, which Ptolemy calls Clysma.

The very country where the event is said to have happened, in some degree bears testimony to the accuracy of the Mosaical narrative. The Scriptural *Ethen* is still called *Etti*. The wilderness of *Shur*, the mountain of *Sinai*, and the country of *Paran*, are still known by the same names ; and *Marah*, *Elath*, and *Midian*, are still familiar to the ears of the Arabs. The grove of *Elim* yet remains, and its twelve fountains have neither increased nor diminished since the days of Moses.

The names which are assigned by Moses to eastern countries and cities, returned to them im-



mediately from the patriarchs, their original founders, are for the most part the very names by which they were anciently known all over the East; many of them were afterwards translated, with little variation, by the Greeks, in their systems of geography. Moses has traced in one short chapter, all the inhabitants of the earth, from the Caspian and Persian seas to the extreme Gades, to their original, and recorded at once the period and occasion of their dispersion.

The late Sir William Jones has very satisfactorily traced the origin of all the people of the earth to the three roots Shem, Ham, and Japheth, according to the account given in the 10th chapter of Genesis. The fact mentioned by him is worthy of remark, that the first dynasties of Peruvian kings are dignified exactly as those of India are, by the name of the Sun and Moon.

Sir William Jones has shewn, that the traditions of the present heathen nations of Asia are not of more ancient authority than the traditions of the ancient nations of Asia and Europe.—“States and empires,” he says, “could scarce have assumed a regular form till fifteen or sixteen hundred years before the Christian epoch; and for the first thousand years of that period



we have no history unmixed with fable, except that of the turbulent and variable, but eminently distinguished nation descended from Abraham."

"The Chinese themselves do not pretend that any historical monument existed among them, in the age of Confucius, more ancient than 1100 years before the Christian epoch.

"The dawn of true Indian history appears only three or four centuries before the Christian era; the preceding ages being clouded by allegory or fable."

Truth is always consistent with itself, and acquires an accession of evidence from every thing with which it stands connected. It is not only beyond the power of perverted ingenuity and learning to invalidate the truth of the facts recorded in the earlier parts of the Scriptural history, but they are confirmed by the traditions of all nations in a manner the most indubitable.



## CHAP. X.

*Testimony to the Messiah, from Prophecies that  
are at present fulfilling in the World.*

BESIDES the prophecies that immediately respect the Messiah, and the introduction of the Christian dispensation, there are others that refer to great general events in the history of the world, which are *fulfilling at this day*. These bear a decisive testimony to the truth of divine revelation.

That degree of obscurity which belongs to prophecy, cannot be pleaded against the certainty of its coming from Him who foresees whatever is to take place. Prophecies were not intended to make men prophets, or to enable them to discern the minute circumstances of future events, so as to interfere with their free agency ; but to give before hand such intimations concerning these events, as that when they do take place it may be known that they were the objects of the pre



diction. Much discredit is often brought on the prophecies, by attempts to apply them beforehand to minute particulars, especially of that age in which we happen to live, which, of course, appears to us to possess a comparative importance beyond what is real. But this arises not from the fault of the prophecies, but from an unwarranted use of them. Those prophecies, however, which shall now be selected,\* as they respect some of the most considerable events that have taken place in the world, both in permanent and immediate importance, possess a very remarkable degree of clearness.

### Noah's Prophecy.

WE have already considered the prophecy of Noah, as it refers to the Messiah; we shall now observe that part of it which relates to the sentence pronounced on Canaan. On account of the sin of which Ham his second son had been guilty, Noah, not in order to gratify any feeling of resentment, but under a divine impulse, delivered the following prediction, which denoun-

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\* See Newton on the Prophecies respecting Canaan, Ishmael, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and the Jews.



ced a curse upon Canaan, one of the sons of Ham, and a blessing on Shem and Japheth.

“ And he said,

“ Cursed be Canaan ;

“ A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

“ And he said,

“ Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem ;

“ And Canaan shall be their servant.

“ God shall enlarge Japheth ;

“ And shall dwell in the tents of Shem ;

“ And Canaan shall be their servant.”

Although the above curse was not pronounced on Ham who had been personally the transgressor, yet it was a heavy punishment on him to hear of the evil that was to fall on his posterity. In this part of the punishment, Noah also, perhaps on account of his own improper conduct, was in a measure involved, in being employed to pronounce this malediction on a large portion of his own descendants.

The curse was directed particularly against the line of Canaan, which must have tended greatly to encourage the Israelites, the descendants of Shem, when sent to take possession of that land which the posterity of Canaan inhabited ; of whom those that were not destroyed, were



brought into bondage, as the Gibeonites, who became hewers of wood and drawers of water. At the same time, this punishment was to be inflicted in perfect conformity with justice. The descendants of Canaan were to suffer for their own sins, by which they recognised the guilt of their progenitor. The Israelites were not permitted to go against them till their "iniquity was full," and till, on account of their wickedness, the land, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "spewed them out;" after which they were overcome by the descendants of Shem. The posterity of Canaan in Tyre and Carthage, were subdued by the descendants of Japheth.

The accomplishment of this prophecy does not appear to have been confined to the line of Canaan, but to have extended to the other children of Ham. The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the children of Ham, and for many ages the better parts of that country lay under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and then of the Turks. Egypt is often called in Scripture the land of Ham, and for many years it was a great and flourishing kingdom. But it was subdued by the Persians, who descended from Shem, and afterwards by the Grecians, who descended from Japheth, and



from that time to this it has constantly been in subjection to some or other of the posterity of Shem or Japheth. The inhabitants of Africa have been bought and sold for slaves from the earliest periods of history, even to the present time. Thus, in the above words of Noah, we have a remarkable prediction, uttered at the distance of above 4000 years, which has been literally fulfilling from that time to the present hour.

### Ishmael.

ANOTHER remarkable prophecy is that concerning Ishmael and his descendants. When Hagar, the servant of Abraham, fled from the face of her mistress, “the angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness, and said unto her, Return unto thy mistress, and submit thyself unto her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every



man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."—"Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." All these prophecies respecting the posterity of Ishmael have been remarkably verified. Strabo frequently mentions the Arabian Phylarchs, or rulers of tribes: and Melo, quoted by Eusebius, from Alexander Polyhistor, a heathen historian, relates, that twelve sons of Abraham departing into Arabia, divided the region between them, and were the first kings of the inhabitants; "whence," says he, "even to our days, the Arabians have twelve kings of the same names as the first." Ever since, the people have been governed by Phylarchs, and have lived in tribes.

And "I will make him a great nation." This is again and again repeated. The Saracens, his descendants, made rapid and extensive conquests, and erected one of the largest empires that ever was in the world. "And he will be a wild man." It is said of Ishmael, Genesis xxi. 20, "That he dwelt in the wilderness;" and his sons still inhabit the same wilderness, and many of them neither sow nor plant.



“ And he became an archer.” Such the Arabs have been, and continue to this day. “ His hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” Ishmael lived by prey and rapine in the wilderness ; and his posterity have all along infested Arabia and the neighbouring countries with their robberies and incursions. They live in a state of continual war with the rest of the world, and are both robbers by land, and pirates by sea. They have been enemies to mankind, and the rest of mankind have been enemies to them, and several unsuccessful attempts have been made to extirpate them. Even now, as well as formerly, travellers are forced to go with arms, and in caravans, or large companies, and to keep watch, and to defend themselves from their assaults, as they go about in troops, and rob and plunder all whom they can by any means subdue. ‘These robberies they also justify, “ by alleging the hard usage of their father Ishmael, who being turned out of doors by Abraham, had the open plains and deserts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there. And, on this account, they think they may justly indemnify themselves as well as they can, not only on the posterity of Isaac, but also on all besides.”



“ And he shall dwell” (tabernacle, or dwell in tents) “ in the presence of all his brethren.” It appears that they dwelt in tents in the wilderness so long ago as in Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s time ; and they do the same at this day. Their hand is against every man, and every man’s hand against them ; and yet they are able to dwell in the presence of all their brethren. This has been fulfilled both in the person of Ishmael, and in his posterity. As for Ishmael himself, the sacred historian afterwards relates, (Gen. xxv. 17, 18.) that “ the years of the life of Ishmael were an hundred and thirty and seven years, and he died in the presence of all his brethren.” His posterity dwelt likewise in the presence of all their brethren ; Abraham’s sons by Keturah ; the Moabites and Ammonites, descendants of Lot ; the Israelites, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; and the Edomites, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Esau. And they still subsist a distinct people, and inhabit the country of their progenitors, notwithstanding the perpetual enmity between them and the rest of mankind. They have from first to last maintained their independence ; and, notwithstanding the most powerful efforts for their destruction, they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren.



They were never subjected by their powerful neighbours the Egyptians or Assyrians, nor by Cyrus and the Persians, the next great conquerors of the East. Neither he nor his successors ever reduced the whole body of the Arabs to subjection. They conquered some of the exterior, but never reached the interior parts of the country. Herodotus, who lived nearest to these times, says expressly, that the Arabs were never reduced by the Persians to the condition of subjects, but were considered by them as friends, and opened to them a passage into Egypt, which, without the assistance and permission of the Arabs, would have been utterly impracticable. In another place, he says, that while Phœnicia, Palestine, Syria, and the neighbouring countries, were taxed, the Arabian territories continued free from paying any tribute.

Alexander the Great then overturned the Persian empire, and conquered Asia. He was preparing an expedition against the Arabs, when an inflammatory fever cut him off in the flower of his age. Alexander's successors attempted to subdue them, but failed. Diodorus says, that "neither the Assyrians formerly, nor the kings of the Medes and Persians, nor yet of the Macedonians, were able to subdue them; nay, though



they led many and great forces against them, yet they could not accomplish their attempts."

The Romans then invaded the East, and subdued the countries adjoining; but were never able to reduce Arabia into the form of a Roman province. Pompey, though he triumphed over three parts of the world, could not conquer Arabia. Elius Gallus, in the reign of Augustus, penetrated far into the country; but at last escaped with a small remainder of his forces. Trajan reduced some parts of Arabia, but could never reduce it entirely. When he besieged the city of the Hagarenes, he was constantly repulsed, and at length was forced to raise the siege, and retired with disgrace into his own dominions. About eighty years afterwards, the Emperor Severus twice besieged the same city with a numerous army, and a train of military engines; but he had no better success than Trajan; neither did any of the following emperors prevail against them. The Arabs continued their incursions and depredations in Syria, and other Roman provinces, with equal licence and impunity.

Such was the state and condition of the Arabs to the time of Mahomet, who laid the foundations of a mighty empire; and then, for several centuries, they were better known among the



European nations by the name of Saracens,—the Araceni of Pliny, and the Hagarenes of Scripture. Their conquests were amazingly rapid. In a few years the Saracens overran more countries, and subdued more people, than the Romans did in several centuries. They were then not only independent themselves, but masters of the most considerable parts of the world. After their empire was dissolved, and they were reduced within the limits of their native country, they still maintained their liberty against the Tartars, Mamalucs, Turks, and all foreign enemies whatever. Whoever conquered Asia, they were still unconquered, and still continued their incursions, and preyed on all. The Turks have now, for several centuries, been masters of the adjacent countries ; but they have been so little able to restrain the depredations of the Arabs, that they have been obliged to pay them a sort of annual tribute.

Thus has this single nation stood out against the enmity of the whole world for near 4000 years together. The great empires around them have all in their turns fallen to ruin, while they have continued the same from the beginning. This, in the common course of human affairs, was in the highest degree improbable. These are the



only people, besides the Jews, who have subsisted as a distinct people from the beginning. They, as well as the Jews, boast of their descent from Abraham, from whom also they profess to have derived circumcision.

THE next four prophecies relate to what were once the chief cities and the most civilized kingdom in the world. These prophecies expressly foretel the greatness of the change they were to experience, as well as its duration. At the present day, we witness their exact accomplishment.

### Nineveh.

NINEVEH, or Ninus as it was usually called by the Greeks and Romans, was a very ancient city, and the metropolis of the Assyrian empire. Diodorus Siculus affirms, that “its builder Ninus proposed to build a city of such magnitude, that it should not only be the greatest of the cities which were then in all the world, but that none of those who should be born after that time, attempting the like, should easily exceed it.” And a little after he subjoins, that “nobody afterwards built such a city, either as to the greatness of the compass, or as to the magnificence of



the walls. It is said by Jonah (iii. 3.) that it was "an exceeding great city of three days journey;" that is, of three days journey in circuit; and that in it "there were more than sixscore thousand persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle;" so that, according to the usual calculation from the number of children, the inhabitants amounted to above six hundred thousand.

The prophet Nahum predicted the entire destruction of this city. And Josephus says, that all the things which Nahum foretold concerning Nineveh came to pass, 115 years afterwards. Nahum prophesied that Nineveh should be destroyed, and also the manner of its destruction. "For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they be drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble full dry." He also foretels, that "the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." Diodorus relates the exact accomplishment of both these prophecies.

Nahum also foretold the total and entire destruction of this city. "The Lord, with an over-running flood, will make an utter end of the place thereof; he will make an utter end; afflic-



tion shall not rise up the second time." Again, "Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions," meaning Nineveh, where princes ravaged like lions, "behold I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will cut off the prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard." And again, "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges, in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known where they are," or have been. "Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them; there is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

The Prophet Zephaniah, in the days of Josiah king of Judah, likewise foretold the same event: "The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness: and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the



beasts of the nations, both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds, for he shall uncover the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly; that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me; how is she become a desolation,—a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand.” Accordingly Lucian, in the second century after Christ, affirms that Nineveh was utterly destroyed, and there was no footsteps of it remaining, nor could you tell where once it was situated. The greater regard is to be paid to Lucian’s testimony, as he was a native of Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates. Thus, even the ruins of old Nineveh have been destroyed. Such an utter end hath been made of it, and such is the truth of the Divine predictions.

### Babylon.

NINEVEH and BABYLON were both enemies to the people of God. The one subverted the kingdom of Israel, and the other the kingdom of Judah. There are therefore several prophecies re-



lating to each of these ; and the fall of Babylon is foretold, as well as that of Nineveh. Jeremiah says, “ Israel is a scattered sheep ; the lions have driven him away ; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, hath broken his bones : Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.” Babylon, like Nineveh, was a very ancient city. It became so great a city that it gave name to a very large empire. It is called in Scripture, “ Great Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency.”

Cyrus, who was the conqueror of Babylon, and transferred the empire from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, was particularly foretold, by name, above an hundred years before he was born, by the Prophet Isaiah, xlv. 1 : “ Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates ; and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight ; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the



treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name ; I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known me."

There are several prophecies concerning Babylon, which were minutely fulfilled, as respecting the enemies that should be brought against it, and the particular manner in which it should be taken, during a feast, by the drying up of the river. The exact accomplishment of these are particularly attested by Heathen historians. The prophet Isaiah, who uttered several of these predictions, lived above 250 years before Herodotus, and nearly 350 before Xenophon, who relate their accomplishment.

The Prophets also foretold that Babylon should be reduced to desolation. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in, from generation to generation. Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there ; but wild beasts of the desert shall



lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there : And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and the dragons in their pleasant palaces ; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.”—“ I will rise up against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant ; and son and nephew,” (or grandson,) “ saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water ; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Jeremiah, speaking much in the same strain, says, “ Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate ; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues : How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken ! How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations ! Therefore the wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, shall dwell there ; and the owls shall dwell therein, and it shall be no more inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in, from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof,



saith the Lord, so no man shall abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.”—“O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness : And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations ; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord : And the land shall tremble and sorrow ; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without an inhabitant. And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant. The sea is come up upon Babylon, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness ; a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.”

These awful predictions were literally accomplished. Babylon was gradually brought down, till it was reduced to ruin. Pausanias, who lived about the middle of the second century, says, “ that of Babylon, the greatest city that the sun ever saw, there is nothing now remaining but the walls.” In the time of the Emperor Theodosius, there was only a great park remain-



ing, in which the kings of Persia bred wild beasts for the amusement of hunting. By these accounts, we see how punctually the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon have been fulfilled. When it was converted into a chace for wild beasts, to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words of the prophets, that—"The wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses." One part of the country was overflowed by the river's having been turned out of its course, and never restored again to its former channel, and thence became marshy; so that it might literally be said to be "a possession for the bittern, and pools of water." Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing; so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, which seemed, in some measure, to contradict the former. "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby." The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures, so that "their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces; and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling



place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant." For all these reasons, "neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there."

Modern travellers cannot now certainly discover the spot whereon this renowned city once was situated. Thus has Babylon "become a desolation among the nations." Every purpose of the Lord hath he performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon "a desolation without an inhabitant." And, "the Lord hath swept it with the besom of destruction."

### Tyre.

The city of Tyre, like Babylon, was an enemy to the Jews; and is another memorable instance, to this hour, of the truth of prophecy. Isaiah describes it as "a mart of nations, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth." It was in this wealthy and flourishing condition, when the prophets foretold its destruction. The prophets denounced the Divine judgment upon the Tyrians, for their pride and wickedness in general, and, in particular, for their



cruelty to the people of Israel. “Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: the children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border: Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and I will return your recompence upon your own head.”

Various particulars, as to the manner of the destruction of Tyre, were also predicted, in a number of separate prophecies, and fully verified by the event. Her final ruin is foretold in these words:—“Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up: And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers. I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.”

The prophet repeats it, to shew its certainty. “I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon: thou shalt be *built no more*; for I, the Lord, hath spoken it,



saith the Lord God." And again, "I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God."—"Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of Hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.—"Thus saith the Lord God, O Tyrus, thou hast said I am of perfect beauty; thy borders are in the midst of the seas; thy builders have perfected thy beauty: By thy great wisdom, and by thy traffic, hast thou increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore will I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities; by the iniquity of thy traffic, therefore, will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold



thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."

Tyre, accordingly, has long ago been destroyed, and every traveller to that part of the world bears witness to the literal fulfilment of the above predictions in its present appearance. Dr Shaw says, "I visited several creeks and inlets, in order to discover what provision there might have been formerly made for the security of their vessels. Yet notwithstanding that Tyre was the chief maritime power of this country, I could not observe the least token of either *cothon* or harbour that could have been of any extraordinary capacity."—"Even this port, small as it is at present, is notwithstanding so choked up with sand and rubbish, that the boats of those poor fishermen who now and then visit this once renowned emporium, can with great difficulty be admitted." Parvillerius, who resided ten years in Syria, said, that when he approached the ruins of Tyre, and beheld the rocks stretched forth to the sea, and the great stones scattered up and down on the shore, made clean and smooth by the sun, and waves, and winds, and useful only for drying fishermen's nets, many of which happened at that time to be spread thereon, it brought to his memory Ezekiel's prophecy.



“ This city,” says Maundrel, “ standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises, at a distance, something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes. On the north side, it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle, besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left; its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. that ‘ it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.’” Such has been the fate of this city, once the most famous in the world for trade and commerce.

### Egypt.

EGYPT is one of the first and most renowned countries that we read of in history. It is called in Scripture Mizraim, and the land of Ham, having been first inhabited after the deluge by



Noah's youngest son Ham or Hammon, and by his son Mizraim. Egypt was also celebrated for its wisdom, and to it the philosophers of Greece repaired and imbibed their learning at this fountain. The revolutions and state of this kingdom to the present day were foretold by the prophets.

The conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar is thus predicted by Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon: He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land, and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain." Ezekiel also foretold that this country should be desolated forty years, and the people dispersed into other countries. "I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities, among the cities that are laid waste, shall be desolate forty years, and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries."

Berosus says, "that Nebuchadnezzar took several captives in Egypt, and carried them to Babylon." And from Megasthenes we learn, that he transplanted and settled others in Pontus.

There are several other predictions concern-



ing the different changes that took place in Egypt; and Ezekiel has foretold the state into which it was at last to fall, and in which it has remained *to this day*. Ezekiel was commanded to set his face against Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and to prophecy against him, and against all Egypt. After denouncing woes upon them, the prophet says, “And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break and rend all their shoulder, and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest and madest all their loins to be at a stand.” Again he says, “I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation, and they shall be there *a base kingdom*. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations.” Afterwards he says, “I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers; I the Lord have spoken it. Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their



images to cease out of Noph, and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." Eze-kiel's prediction is fully attested by the whole series of the history of Egypt, from that time to the present.

It is now much more than two thousand years since this prophecy was first delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there that Egypt, so great a kingdom, so rich and fertile a country, should for so many ages bow under a foreign yoke, and never afterwards be able to recover its liberties, and have a prince of its own to reign over it. But as is the prophecy, so is the event. For not long afterwards, Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Persians, and after the Persians it became subject to the Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Romans, and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then to the Mamalucs, and is now a province of the Othman empire.

Thus Egypt, once so renowned, and the first of kingdoms, has been a base kingdom; and Ham, in his posterity, has been a servant of servants unto his brethren. The people of Egypt are described by travellers as exceedingly wicked and treacherous, and so very greedy and cruel, that



they will murder a man for the smallest reward.

We see, then, how Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, the great adversaries and oppressors of the Jews, have been visited by divine vengeance, both for their idolatry, pride, and wickedness, and for their enmity and cruelty to the people of God.

### The Jews.

THE kingdom of Israel was separated from all other nations, in order that, through it, the kingdom of heaven, which was to be universal, might be introduced. In consequence of this separation, the Jews enjoyed uncommon privileges; but, as they abused these privileges, their punishment has been as signal as their exaltation. Throughout the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, from the time when they were separated as a nation, there is a remarkable series of prophecies concerning them, to which an important addition was afterwards made by the Lord Jesus himself. To some of these prophecies we shall now advert, especially such as were delivered by Moses.

In the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses



says to Israel, "If thine heart turn away so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." In the 28th chapter of the same book, a full detail is given of the calamities that would overtake them if they should be disobedient. These predictions were all fulfilled, though not at once. Different enemies were brought against them, and they sustained several sieges, all pointed out in various predictions, which were ultimately and fully accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, when "wrath came upon them to the uttermost," and in their final and grand dispersion.

We find it foretold, that an enemy was to be brought against them for their punishment. Deut. xxviii. 49, "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the *eagle* flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." Again, "Lo I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. It is a mighty nation; it is an ancient nation; a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand-



est what they say.”—“ A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.”—“ And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land.” Thus the Romans, whose significant standard was an EAGLE, were brought against them.

In the siege, they were to suffer much, especially from famine. The man’s “ eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward his children ; because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates ;” and, in like manner, the woman’s “ eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter.”

It was expressly foretold, that not only the men, but even the women, should eat their own children. “ Ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.”—“ And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters.” And more particularly, “ The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adven-



ture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness,—she shall eat her children, for want of all things, secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates.” This was fulfilled about six hundred years after the time of Moses among the Israelites, when Samaria was besieged by the King of Syria, and two women agreed together, the one to give up her son to be boiled and eaten to-day, and the other to deliver up her son to be dressed and eaten to-morrow: and one of them was eaten accordingly. It was fulfilled again, about nine hundred years after the time of Moses among the Jews, in the siege of Jerusalem, before the Babylonish captivity. Jeremiah bewails this in his Lamentations: “The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.” And again it was fulfilled, above fifteen hundred years after the time of Moses, in the last siege of Jerusalem by Titus. And we read in Josephus, particularly, of a noblewoman, illustrious for her family and riches, killing and eating her own sucking child. Thus exactly were fulfilled the words of Moses, concerning “the tender and delicate woman, who would not adventure to set



the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness."

Great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. "And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude." Josephus computes, that, during the whole siege, the number of those who were destroyed by it and by the war, amounted to eleven hundred thousand, the people being assembled from all parts to celebrate the passover.

They were to be carried into Egypt, and sold for a very low price. "And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." This was literally fulfilled. The markets were quite overstocked with them; and Josephus says, they were sold with their wives and children at the lowest price.

They were to be rooted out of their own land. "And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it."

They were also to be dispersed into all nations. "And thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." And again, "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other."—"I will



scatter you among the Heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste." All this has been literally fulfilled.

They should suffer much in their dispersion. "And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." They have been banished from city to city, from country to country. In many places they have been banished, and recalled, and banished again. In the latter end of the 13th century, they were banished from England: in the latter end of the 14th century, they were banished from France for the seventh time: in the latter end of the 15th century, they were banished from Spain. Most of them paid dearly for a refuge in Portugal; but, within a few years, they were expelled from thence also.

They should be "oppressed and spoiled evermore;" and their "houses" and "vineyards," their "oxen" and "asses," should be taken from them, and "they should be only oppressed and crushed alway." Frequent seizures have been made of their effects, and they have been fined and plundered in almost all countries; and in innumerable instances, they have been forced to redeem their lives with their treasure.



“Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people.” In several countries, in Spain and Portugal particularly, their children have been taken from them by order of the government, to be educated in the Popish religion. When they were banished from Portugal, the King ordered all their children under fourteen to be taken from them and baptized.

“Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.” By cruel usage, extortions, and oppressions, which they have undergone, they have often been driven to madness and desperation; as, for instance, in the reign of Richard the First, when the people were in arms to make a general massacre of them, fifteen hundred of them seized on the city of York to defend themselves; but, being besieged, they offered to capitulate, and to ransom their lives with money. The offer being refused, one of them cried in despair, that it was better to die courageously for the law, than to fall into the hands of the Christians. Every one immediately stabbed his wife and children. The men afterwards retired into the King’s palace, which they set on fire, in which they consumed themselves with the palace and furniture.



“ And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.” This prophecy we see and hear fulfilled almost every day. The word *Jew* is continually used as a proverb. They are generally hated. Mahomedans, heathens, and nominal Christians, however they may disagree in other points, yet agree in vilifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews.

“ And the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of *long continuance*.” Such are the awful denunciations of prophecy against the Jews, which have overtaken them on account of their many and aggravated transgressions; but above all on account of their rejection of the Messiah. It was then that the measure of their iniquity was filled up. 1 Thess. ii. 15, “ They both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” Thus their own imprecation has been remarkably and awfully fulfilled, “ His blood be upon us and on our children.”



The foregoing prophecies were all delivered by Moses *more than 3000 years ago*, and many others, to the like effect, are scattered through the writings of all the subsequent prophets.

The Lord Jesus himself has added a most minute and remarkable prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, uttered nearly forty years before that event. A full and most striking illustration of this prophecy, in a detail of all the circumstances which took place, is given by Josephus, who was an eye witness on the spot. The temple was burnt on the 10th day of the month of August, of the year 70, the same day and month on which it had been burnt by the king of Babylon. Tacitus, the Roman historian, confirms, by his account of the siege, the testimony of Josephus.

The destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem is an event of great importance. It accomplished a great number of prophecies. And by putting a visible and necessary end to the Jewish economy, it made way for the dispensation of the Messiah.

Titus, who commanded the Roman army, was exceedingly desirous of saving the temple. But, contrary to his most earnest wish, circumstances led to its being set on fire. A dreadful massacre



ensued, in which thousands perished, and the whole city, with its fortifications, palaces, towers, and walls, were levelled to the ground. Before the temple was consumed, Titus entered into the sanctuary and most holy place, and was struck with its remaining grandeur. Out of the former he saved the golden candlestick, the table of the shew bread, the altar of incense, all of pure gold, and the book of the law wrapped up in a rich golden tissue. After Vespasian's triumph at Rome, he built a Temple of Peace, in which he laid up these golden vessels and instruments; but the law, and the purple veils of the holy place, he ordered to be deposited in his palace. These spoils were carried off by Genseric, 400 years afterwards, when he pillaged Rome. On the triumphal arch of Titus, erected at Rome, which remains a noble monument of antiquity, and which the writer of this has seen, the representation of the table and candlestick is still visible. There is a small passage at one side for the Jews, as they cannot be prevailed on to go under the arch.

To his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus added another strikingly descriptive of its condition since that event to the present hour, which also contains an intimation that



the Jews shall at last be restored. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,*" or, as Paul expresses it, "till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

The present internal condition of the Jews is remarkably declared, in connection with their future restoration, in the words of the Prophet Hosea. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, (or altar,) and without an ephod, (or priest to wear an ephod,) and without teraphim, (or Divine manifestations.) Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." According to the law of Moses, their solemn feasts and sacrifices are limited to one certain place, and that has been now for many ages in the hands of strangers and aliens, who will not suffer them to go thither. Thus, in the most complete manner has the prediction of Daniel, when speaking of the coming of the Messiah, been fulfilled. He shall "make an end of sin offering;" and again, "*he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation*



*to cease."* The Emperor Julian, in order to falsify these predictions, and because the Lord had said, Jerusalem "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," attempted to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, and promised to restore the Jews to their habitations. His purpose, however, was frustrated, and his death, on his Persian expedition, put an end to their hopes from that quarter.

The preservation of the Jews as a separate people, and their restoration at last, are as distinctly announced as their various calamities and dispersion.

Moses says, "The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity, because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will, for their sakes, remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the Heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord." Jeremiah says, "Fear thou not, O Ja-



cob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee ; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee ; but I will not make a full end of thee." And again the prophet Amos, " For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." Accordingly although the Jews are dispersed among all nations, they still continue a distinct people, and yet they nowhere live according to their own laws, nowhere elect their own magistrates, and nowhere can enjoy the full exercise of their religion.

No people have continued unmixed so long as they have done, not only of those who have sent forth colonies into foreign countries, but even of those who have remained in their own country. The northern nations have come in swarms into the more southern parts of Europe ; but where are they now to be discerned and distinguished ? The Gauls went forth in great bodies to seek their fortune in foreign parts ; but what traces or footsteps of them are now remaining anywhere ? In France, who can separate the race of the ancient Gauls from the various people who from time to time have settled there ? In Spain, who can distinguish exactly between the first posses-



sors the Spaniards, and the Goths, and the Moors, who conquered and kept possession of the country for some ages? In England, who can pretend to say with certainty which families are derived from the ancient Britons, and which from the Romans, or Saxons, or Danes, or Normans?

The most ancient and honourable pedigrees, can be traced up only to a certain period; and, beyond that, there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, obscurity and ignorance. But the Jews can go up higher than any nation; they can even deduce their pedigree from the beginning of the world. They may not know from what particular tribe or family they are descended; but they know certainly that they all sprung from the stock of Abraham. And yet, the contempt with which they have been treated, and the hardships they have undergone, in almost all countries, should, it might be supposed, have made them desirous to forget or renounce their original; but they profess it, they glory in it: and after so many wars, massacres, and persecutions, they still subsist, they still are very numerous. We see them excluded from the only country to which they have any attachment, vagabonds on the earth, and dispersed indifferently through



every quarter of it, the scorn and outcasts of all other nations. On the other hand, although every where spurned, reviled, and oppressed, we see them yet continuing to hold fast their offensive profession, and not worn out by this usage, nor induced by it to renounce that profession, and take refuge in the mass of the people among whom they live. But they still subsist, a numerous, a distinct, and wretched people. All this has something in it which the common principles of human nature will not explain.

The predictions concerning the restoration of the Jews, are also express. "Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, even they and their children, and their childrens children for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."—"Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, who caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them into their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel,



saith the Lord God." These promises have already had a subordinate and typical fulfilment; but their ultimate accomplishment, after which the Lord will not hide his face any more from them, is still future.

In the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul declares the future restoration of Israel to the favour of God. After informing his brethren that the Jewish nation was broken off because of unbelief, and warning them to be on their guard lest they too, as branches grafted in, should be broken off on the same account, he says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved."

The present situation of the Jews, and what it has been, especially for the last 1700 years, is such, that when compared with the foregoing prophecies, it is sufficient to strike infidelity dumb. Many object to the miracles of the first ages of Christianity; and, in order to discredit them, bring forward all the counterfeit miracles that can be raked together. They insist, in like manner, that the prophecies of Scripture are either



so obscure that they cannot be understood, and that they may mean any thing; or, that they were written after the events which they are said to predict. Here then is a series of prophecies concerning facts obvious to their senses, of which it cannot be even alleged that it is either forged or obscure. Nor, although they were to collect all the conjectures that ever came to pass, which have been dignified with the name of prophecies, can they pretend to shew any thing like these combined pre-intimations of a great, extensive, and complex historical fact?

If, admitting that there is something remarkable in these predictions, they should assert that the event itself may be accounted for from natural causes; let them, in all the history of the world, point out any thing similar to it. It is sometimes said, that the Jews believe themselves the favourites of heaven; and it is natural to cling to such a flattering idea. If they believe themselves to be so, what was it which, notwithstanding all the calamities they have suffered, has *indelibly impressed* on them this belief? When men, in opposing evident truth, attempt to get rid of one difficulty, they only fall into another. Let all be upon their guard, lest the declaration applied to the Jews by Paul, be in them



also verified. *“Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish, for I work a work in YOUR days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”*

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BESIDES the above, and many similar prophecies, there is a series of predictions in the Scriptures, which, beginning in Daniel's time, describe the general state of the world till the consummation of all things. These prophetic intimations were first communicated in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, under the form of a great image, having its several parts composed of different metals. This vision left a deep impression on Nebuchadnezzar's mind, but he was unable to recollect what he had seen. The prophet Daniel, however, then at Babylon, brought the whole to his remembrance, and interpreted the meaning of the vision as follows:

“Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till



that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the King. Thou, O King, art a King of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given unto thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all, these shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, but there



shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the Great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Thus the four great successive kingdoms of the world, the fourth, after destroying the others, being divided into ten parts, and the fifth and last kingdom set up without the power of man, and finally destroying every remnant of the image, were represented to Nebuchadnezzar.



“ The transient dream, which so soon vanished, and the lifeless image, were both emblems of the emptiness and vanity of all earthly glory.”

The same events were afterwards represented to Daniel, under the appearance of four wild beasts. These four beasts, according to the interpretation given to Daniel, signified the same with the four constituent parts of Nebuchadnezzar's splendid image. They arose out of the great sea, on which the four winds strove, which represented the earth and its inhabitants kept in violent and perpetual agitation by ambitious conquerors. They appeared not all at once, but one after another, which signified that these kingdoms should succeed each other.

Daniel vii. 2, “ I saw in my vision by night, and behold the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it, and they said thus unto it, Arise,



devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl. The beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body de-



stroyed and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Daniel being desirous to know the interpretation of this vision, inquired the meaning of it at one who appeared present in the scene. "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." This was a very clear general interpretation of the whole vision. But Da-



niel wished to receive a more particular account of the fourth kingdom, and of the little horn which persecuted the saints, and made war against them.

“ Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass, which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet? And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows? I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom?” To these questions, Daniel received the following answer:

“ Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise, and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall



subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

In this vision, the state of the world, till the end of time, was represented. The first beast, with its characteristic features and appendages, was an emblem of the Chaldean monarchy. The next beast, with its appropriate signs, represented the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The one that followed, combining the appearance of ferocity and swiftness, and with *four* heads, denoted the Macedonian or Grecian empire, erected by Alexander the Great, on the ruins of the Persian Monarchy, and which continued in four divisions under his successors.

That these three beasts represented the Chaldean, the Persian, and the Macedonian monar-



chies, there is no room left to doubt. The head of the image, which corresponded to the first of them, was as Nebuchadnezzar was told, his own empire. And afterwards, when the second and third beasts were represented to Daniel in another vision, under the emblems of a ram and he goat, he was expressly informed of their meaning, chap. viii. 20—22, “The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia, and the rough goat,” (which destroyed the ram, and brake his two horns,) “is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand out of the nation, but not in his power.” What is intended by the fourth beast, out of whom sprung ten horns, cannot be mistaken.

The fourth beast appeared dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth, it devoured and brake in pieces, and stampt the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that was before it, and it had ten horns.”—“I considered,” said Daniel, “the horns, and behold there came out among them another little horn.” The Roman empire devouring the former kingdoms, and subduing the whole earth, was thus represented to Daniel,



as it had been in Nebuchadnezzar's image, as "iron that breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things." The ten horns, (a horn in Scripture being an emblem of power,) signifying the same thing with the ten toes in that image, denoted, as Daniel was informed, ten kings that should arise. This was fulfilled in the ten kingdoms which sprung up out of the Roman empire, and which are known in history by the name of the ten kingdoms of the Western Empire. That which was signified by the little horn, which afterwards came up among the rest, whose cunning, arrogance, persecuting spirit, blasphemies, and lawless conduct, is in each of these particulars characterized, has been remarkably verified in that singular power "diverse" from every other power that ever was on earth, which arose among the ten kingdoms. Although a *little* horn, and remarkable, not for strength, but for *eyes* and a *mouth*, speaking very great things, and a *look* more stout than his fellows, it usurped dominion over the rest.

At length the Ancient of Days, the Eternal God, arrayed in awful majesty, seated on his throne, was emblematically represented. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."



Because of the great words which the little horn spake, the judgment was set, "the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." "One, like the Son of Man," then "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This last part of the vision had appeared to Nebuchadnezzar, as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which had broken in pieces the image, and made it like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." This stone was distinct from the image, and directly opposite to it and all its interests. It is therefore a kingdom set up by the power of God, without the concurrence of human policy or force.

The same things were thus represented in both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's visions. "To the worldly mind of Nebuchadnezzar, mighty conquerors and extensive flourishing empires would have a show of glory, which was represented by a splendid and immense image. To the spiritual mind of Daniel, they would only appear terrible,



odious, and destructive, which was more aptly denoted by the appearance of fierce and devouring wild beasts; the monarchies thus represented, being the great supporters of idolatry and persecution in the world."

In these visions, we have a prophetical abstract of the most signal events that should take place through all succeeding ages. As far as the accomplishment has yet proceeded, it has been most exact and undeniable, and it is proceeding at this day. These four monarchies, the mightiest that ever appeared on earth, have been far more celebrated than any others. The history of them comprises the grand transactions of mankind from the days of Daniel to the present time. The kingdom of God, likewise, has been much more concerned with them than with any other empires. The countries belonging to them have been hitherto the chief seat of the Redeemer's kingdom, which has been gradually enlarging, and will be rendered universal at the time of the total subversion of the last of them. This termination of these kingdoms of this world, also coincides with that prediction to the Jews, already quoted. "Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; *for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I*



*have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee."*

When Daniel recorded these visions, only the first of the four kingdoms had appeared. About 600 years afterwards, when the Apostles wrote, that first kingdom, with the second and third, had been subverted, and the fourth kingdom subsisted in vigour. It was not then divided, as afterwards, into ten parts. That part of the prediction, therefore, with all that follows, remained to be accomplished. Accordingly, what was then future, is taken up in the New Testament, and much dwelt upon, especially in the book of Revelation, the descriptions in which, entirely coincide with those of Daniel, but are much amplified and illustrated. Porphyry the philosopher, who wrote against the scriptures in the third century, was so much struck with the exact fulfilment of Daniel's prophecies, as far as they had proceeded in his time, that, contrary to all historical evidence, he insisted they could not be written by Daniel, but more recently by some one else, under his name.

Before the book of Revelation was written, the Apostle Paul took up the subject of the above prophecies. What he had prophetically said in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, having been



misunderstood by them, and construed as an intimation that the end of the world was at hand, he wrote to them a second letter, in which he corrected their mistake. In doing this, he assures them, that before that event a great corruption of Christianity was to take place; but that it would not commence during the continuance of the Roman Empire. He describes the same power which was represented to Daniel, under the emblem of the little horn, who, Daniel declares, “shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws.”

Concerning him, Paul says,—“Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: *only he who now obstructeth will obstruct until he be taken out of the way*, and then that wicked one shall be



revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming." Here there is a power described, not under an infidel form, but "that sitteth in the temple of God," occupying the place of God. Paul declares that this mystery of iniquity was already at work, but would be obstructed till he who obstructed was taken out of the way.

It is a well known fact, and particularly worthy of being observed, that the early Christians understood this obstruction, which at last was to be taken out of the way, to mean the Roman Empire. For, in Tertullian's apology, at the end of the second century, he expressly refers to this declaration of the Apostle's, in order to prove the interest that Christians felt in the duration of that Empire. "Even now," says Tertullian, quoting Paul's words, "the mystery of iniquity is working; only he who obstructeth will obstruct until he is taken out of the way." Who is this but the Roman Empire, whose *division into so many kingdoms, will bring on Antichrist*, and then shall that wicked one be revealed." Most of the early Christian writers held the same thing. And Jerome, who wrote about the year 390, says, "it was the *general opinion*, that towards the end of the world, ten kings should share the Roman



Empire, and that Antichrist should be the eleventh, and overcome all." It, therefore, appears probable that the Apostle Paul had personally informed the Thessalonians of this, as he refers in his second Epistle to the things which he had said when among them. "Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things."

The last part of the Apostle's description, (that the Lord should consume that wicked one with the Spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming,) corresponds with the representation given by Daniel of the judgment being set, and because of the great words which the horn spake, of the body of the beast being destroyed, and given to the burning flame, and of the coming of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven. Paul also describes this Antichristian power, not only as a wicked or "lawless" one, but as a deceiver and a worker of false miracles. "Even him," he adds, "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."

In his Epistle to Timothy, the same Apostle mentions this same great corruption of Christianity, which he introduces by saying, that it was



expressly declared by the Spirit of God : “ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines concerning demons ; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created, to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” The Apostle had alluded before to the lying wonders or *false miracles*, and now he speaks of the *pious frauds* which are justified by that man of sin, and of his *forbidding to marry*, and *commanding to abstain from meats* ; also of his doctrines concerning demons, his worshipping of angels and the departed spirits of those called saints, as the Heathens worshipped demons, or the manes of departed men whom they deified. All this is to be connected with what is also said of his sitting in the temple of God, his thinking to change times and laws, and his persecution of the saints. The grand apostacy and corruption of Christianity, which has actually taken place in these “ latter times,” is thus, in its various and extraordinary features, most distinctly pointed out.

In the Book of Revelation, the same subject



is taken up more at large. The “little horn” of Daniel, “speaking great words against the Most High, and thinking to change times and laws, and the “wicked one” described by Paul, “opposing himself to God, and *commanding* to abstain from what God has created to be received,” is, in the Book of Revelation, made known to John, and fully described as “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,” (the general figure employed in Scripture for idolatrous worship,) and by whom “the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk (intoxicated) with the wine of her fornication.” She is represented as “*drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*” As the persecutor of the people of God, she is called Babylon; the antitype of that city which persecuted and led Israel into captivity in ancient times. The place of her residence is also pointed out. She is described as “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,” and as “sitting on *seven mountains.*”

“Those who survey,” says Mr Gibben, “with a curious eye, the revolutions of mankind, may observe, that the gardens and circus of Nero on the



Vatican, which were polluted with the blood of the first Christians, have been rendered still more famous by the triumph and by the abuse of the persecuted religion. On the same spot, a temple, which far surpasses the ancient glories of the Capitol, has been since erected by the Christian Pontiffs, who, deriving their claim of universal dominion from an humble fisherman of Galilee, have succeeded to the throne of the Cæsars, given laws to the barbarian conquerors of Rome, and extended their spiritual jurisdiction from the coast of the Baltic to the shores of the Pacific Ocean."

This power is also denominated by John "a wild beast," the emblem of a worldly persecuting government. And he adds, "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings—these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."

The Apostle Paul had informed the Thessalonians, that this great corruption was not to take place till after the removal of the Roman empire; and John distinctly declares its continuance to be 1260 years. This is exactly the period also fixed by Daniel, from whose vision we are informed that this power should endure



until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. In prophetical language, a time is taken for a year; times, the plural, are two years; and the dividing of time, half a year. This is the same with forty-two months, reckoning, according to the general computation formerly, of thirty days to a month; which, again, is the same period as 1260 days,—a year, in the language of prophecy, being denoted by a day. Accordingly, John twice fixes that period exactly in these ways. He says the holy city shall be trodden down “forty and two months,” and the witnesses shall prophesy in sackcloth “a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” Again, he mentions the period of the present confusion in the kingdom of God, describing the church of God under the figure of a woman who has fled into a wilderness, and is fed there “one thousand two hundred and threescore days;” and again, in mentioning the Antichristian power, and using, concerning it, the very words of Daniel, that he had “a mouth speaking great things,” and, according to Paul, “blasphemies,” he says, “Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

As Nebuchadnezzar had beheld in his vision the stone cut out of the mountain without hands,



break the image in pieces, and driving it away like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; as Daniel, on the appearance of the "Son of Man," had seen the "Beast slain, his body destroyed and given to the burning flame;" and as Paul had declared, that the Lord would consume that wicked one with "the Spirit of his mouth and with the brightness of his coming:" so John at length witnessed, in vision, the majestic procession of the Son of Man, whose "name is called the Word of God"—"the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," followed by the heavenly hosts going forth to the last conflict with the Beast, and with the kings of the earth, who were also ranged against him, whom "he cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Immediately afterwards John says, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be ful-



filled ; and after that he must be loosed a little season."

How remarkable is this chain of prophecy revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, delivered by Daniel, and, at the distance of about six hundred years, completed by the Apostles Paul and John ! It points out the great events of between three and four thousand years, and afterwards to the end of time. First, we have the succession of the four great Heathen powers of the world from Daniel's time ; then the division of the last into the ten kingdoms ; the springing up of a power among them, apparently of little comparative strength, but which, by art and cunning, gains the ascendancy among them. This power is entirely different from any other that ever was in the world ; and it has extended its dominion further, and, in its zenith, reigned with more absolute sway, than ever did Pagan Rome. Next we have the period of the duration of this power, and afterwards an account of his total destruction, involving that of all the kingdoms which support and stand connected with him. This will be the commencement of a thousand years of peace and prosperity to the church of God.

Of that glorious period, the peaceful and prosper-



ous reign of Solomon appears to have been a type. Then after many violent and bloody contentions with enemies, both within and without, a universal peace was established. The Temple was erected and finished, the instituted worship was completely observed, and all the promises to Israel of temporal prosperity were fulfilled in their utmost extent.

In like manner, the present otherwise unaccountable and disordered state of things among the people of God, represented in prophecy by the figure of a woman, who has fled from the face of her mortal enemy into a wilderness, shall be brought to an end. Satan, who at present goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, who is styled the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, shall then be bound for a thousand years, during which he shall not as formerly deceive the nations. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall strike the image, and break it to pieces, and shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. That kingdom, which is to "stand for ever," shall then take the place of all other kingdoms. The blessing of Abraham, in its fullest import, shall come upon all nations, of



which the Jews also shall then partake. "As it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." And, "if the casting away of Israel was the reconciling of the world, what shall be the receiving of them but life from the dead?" The people of God shall then be all brought out of Babylon. Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God. The most hostile nations shall be reconciled to Him and to each other. "In that day shall there be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Jesus shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto his name. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. All



the predicted blessings to Zion, already fulfilled in part, shall then be fully accomplished. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." These happy consequences of Messiah's peaceful and righteous government, when it shall become universal, and take full effect, Jews and Gentiles submitting themselves to it, are minutely described in a variety of other prophecies.

Respecting these predictions, there has been little difference of opinion among Christians, except as to the particular dates when the events shall take place. For instance, as to the exact period of the 1260 years. It is well known, that it is extremely difficult to settle precise periods, as events in the world generally take place by degrees. It would even be difficult to fix the beginning of the French revolution. Some would assign one period, and some another; and, therefore, had a precise number of years been foretold for its duration, there would have been much controversy as to the exact time when these years should terminate. People of the world, having never examined for themselves the subject of prophecy, and hearing of disputes among Christians as to dates and some subordi-



nate circumstances, and knowing that figurative language is used in the prophecies, turn from them with contempt. But it is the contempt of ignorance, which proper investigation would remove.

This contempt, however, is increased by over-minute applications of the prophecies to present times, which, when they turn out to be unfounded, tend to make many suppose themselves justified in paying no attention whatever to the predictions contained in the Scriptures. But while the danger of being dazzled with what happens in our own time, should make Christians cautious on these subjects, and over-minuteness is to be avoided, the great outlines of these prophecies are sufficiently clear. They are calculated long before their accomplishment, to raise expectation, to excite hope, and to animate the people of God in the darkest periods. When they have these effects, and are regarded as evidences to the truth of the Gospel, their legitimate end is attained. But there is one error against which Christians should be on their guard. However clear, in any respect, the prophecies may be, they ought never to consider them as a rule of duty, for which they are not intended.

The commencement of the millennium, it has



been generally calculated, will take place about the year 2000. \* The rise of the Antichristian power is thus dated from near the middle of the eighth century, to which, adding 1260 years, we are brought to the above period. Present appearances favour this opinion. Much remains to be done, but much is doing. Rapid progress is making in the increase of the means of knowledge. Circumnavigators went before, and have discovered the remotest parts of the world. To these, as well as to the distant colonies that belong to Europe, the advantages of civilization are beginning to extend. The translation of the Scriptures, into all languages, is ra-

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\* The year in which Christ was born, is, according to the exactest computation, the 4000th from the creation, which falls in precisely with the time where an old tradition of the Jew places the beginning of the days of the Messiah. According to it there were to be 2000 years before the law, 2000 years under the law, and 2000 years under the Messiah. This tradition is said to be of great antiquity, and is still retained by the Jews as one of the most authentic. They confess that the 4000th year from the creation was the time from whence the days of the Messiah were to begin, and that this was the very time which was pointed out by the prophecies of the Old Testament for the time of his coming; but they say that the fulfilling of them has been delayed by reason of their iniquities.



pidly advancing, and the light of the Gospel is breaking forth on the right hand and on the left. The Lord reigneth, of the increase of his government there shall be no end. His purposes shall stand, and will all be accomplished by him, in the best manner, and at the most proper season :  
“ I the Lord will hasten it in his time.”



## CONCLUSION.

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THE testimonies to the Messiah, both before and after his appearance, are many and various, and also of a very public nature. We have seen a nation separated from all others, acting a conspicuous part, and possessing the most ancient records. Their writings are carried on from age to age, recording the transactions as they occur, of the people among whom they were compiled; and they entirely coincide with their oral traditions, as well as with those of all other nations. The history itself is indissolubly interwoven, in the most momentous occurrences, with that of the principal kingdoms then in the world. Egypt, confessedly the parent of civilization and science to Greece and Rome, was the first theatre on which this nation appears.

Nothing could be more memorable to the people of Egypt than the occasion of the Israel-



ites settling in their land. A young man brought among them as a slave, raised to the office of prime minister, directing the affairs of the nation with singular prudence during seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, in the course of which, and by his means, a very material change in the government took place, was an event which could not soon be forgotten. To provide for his father and family, he brings them from Canaan to Egypt, where they and their posterity continue, and multiply into a great nation. The king of Egypt becomes alarmed at their number; and bringing them under servitude, endeavours by all means to diminish and depress them. At length, increased to the number of between two and three millions of persons, they obtained leave to depart, after several tokens of divine interposition in their favour, no less public than distressing to Egypt. After their departure, the king, and a multitude of his people, in their too eager pursuit to bring them back into bondage, are swallowed up in the Red Sea.

During forty years, the Israelites remain in the wilderness which separates Canaan from Egypt, without any apparent human means of supporting themselves. At the end of that time, they enter Canaan, make war on the inhabitants, and,



after several years of severe contest, take possession of the land, which they claim as an inheritance bestowed on them long before. In that land they remain, from first to last, above 1500 years, observing rites, and a mode of worship totally different from all other people in the world, either before or since that time.

After having attained, for several ages under their kings, to a considerable measure of power, they are conquered, their principal city destroyed, and themselves carried captive to Babylon. But at the end of seventy years, they return in a body, and re-build their capital. Afterwards, they experience several vicissitudes. Their country is often overrun; multitudes of them are carried away prisoners, and scattered among the nations; but never, as, without one exception, has been the fate of all other people in similar circumstances, are they absorbed by their conquerors, but always remain separate and distinct. In this situation, they continue to marry among themselves, to maintain their peculiar forms of worship, and to preserve, with the most respectful scrupulosity, their public records, which they regard as delivered to them by God himself, through the instrumentality of their prophets.

The theatre on which the whole of this is act-



ed, is sufficiently public : the facts are remarkably so, involving the character, history, and fate of kings and of kingdoms. Is there any contradiction to all this ? There is none. But as far as the authentic histories of other nations touch upon the subject, and as far as more remote notices respecting it can be collected, in so far it is all confirmed.

In the Jewish records are contained many particular prophecies respecting a Ruler, to whom their government was eventually to belong ; and with reference to whom, the Jews understood that the whole ritual of their worship was instituted. This excites their expectation ; and they look for his coming at the particular period, when they have reason to expect it from their writings. Nor is this expectation confined to them : it is spread all over the world.

At the same time, these records pointedly declare, that when He should appear, they, as a nation, would reject him, and that, in consequence, their government should be overturned, and themselves dispersed ; but, on the other hand, that the nations of the world, who were overrun with heathen idolatry and superstition, should acknowledge him as their Lord.

JESUS CHRIST assuming to himself the charac-



ter of this expected Messiah, comes at the very time when he was looked for. Knowledge and refinement had then risen to a higher pitch than ever they had attained before; a common language was almost every where spoken; and the general peace of the world, established under the powerful government of the first Roman Emperor, rendered the intercourse among all nations both frequent and easy.

When Jesus came forward as the Messiah, and wrought miracles in proof of his divine mission, the Jews, after having watched him with the utmost jealousy, seized and put him to death. Many individuals, however, among them boldly acknowledged him. The Jewish nation never denied the miracles he wrought, but persecuted his followers as they had done himself. Thus every idea of collusion was cut off, which assuredly would have been pleaded had he been unanimously acknowledged by his own countrymen.

But, notwithstanding all the opposition of the Jewish nation, backed and assisted by the Roman government, and although they had put him to death, the success of the doctrine of Jesus was great. Numbers of Christians were soon found in every part of the Roman empire—the temples



of the gods were deserted. Within three hundred years Christianity was acknowledged as the general religion, and has since retained an undisturbed pre-eminence in every civilized country of the world. And, on the whole, it has produced the greatest revolution that ever happened in human affairs.

In order to be convinced that nothing but the truth of the character of Jesus Christ can account for such facts, let us view what relates to him a little more particularly. In the expected Messiah, the object of the patriarchal system was to be accomplished; the law of Moses, with its peculiar institutions, was to be fulfilled and terminated; and the whole of the mysterious history of the Jewish nation, from their origin and through all its successive periods, was to be explained. Whoever has attended but in the slightest degree to the complicated nature of the various institutions of Judaism, must be convinced that no human art was equal to the combination, in any one character, of all that was necessary to this effect. Embracing an almost infinite variety of particulars, it was indispensably requisite, from the perfection of the design which was announced, that there should not be the smallest flaw in any part of its fulfilment. As the mo-



del was complicated beyond measure, and at the same time consistent with itself, it was necessary that the counterpart should entirely correspond. The high character claimed, required infallibility. If it should be possible that any contradiction, any inconsistency with the pattern delineated, or any trace of imperfection or weakness in him to whom the whole applied could be discovered, imposture must be confessed, and the claim vacated. Public contempt, disgrace, opposition, and finally death itself, were to be passed through in attaining the ultimate consummation of this character; which could only be completed by bursting the bars of the grave, in order to carry forward the work assigned, which till then had been only begun. Detection in case of failure was insured, by the power and ability opposed to the claim. The whole was to be carried on in the face of men in authority jealous and watchful, whose political existence depended on their detecting the fraud, if any such there was. These things sufficiently shew the nature of the work which Jesus Christ undertook when he assumed the character of the Messiah. But he did undertake it, and no flaw has been discovered. Yet the subject of his mission has been canvassed and scrutinized beyond any other question in the



world. Could any thing but truth have stood this?

It has been observed, that the Apostles have drawn a perfect character, which, except by themselves, has never been done in the world. This is very striking, especially when we consider that it is exhibited through a train of circumstances the most trying that can be conceived. But this perfection of character, astonishing as it is, and from its never having been before or since exhibited, we may confidently conclude beyond the power of uninspired men to produce, is but a part of a great whole. The uniting in this character all the lines of a long series of prophecies, delivered not systematically, but as occasions arose, not by one man but by many, not at one period, but through a succession of ages; the completing the correspondence and accomplishment of multiplied types, and of a complicated ritual; the unravelling of a series of miracles, and of a history of such singular features; the delivering at once the laws of a universal kingdom, involving the regulation of every motive of human action, and of every part of human conduct, which should challenge the approbation and defy the malevolence of the most enlightened successive ages, to point out in them either redun-



dancy or defect, was all to be superadded to the delineation of a perfect character. When the whole together is taken into account, the possibility of imposture is left far out of sight. A work is accomplished, which, on any other principle than that of divine interposition, can never be accounted for. It is not necessary to bring into view the circumstances and attainments of the fishermen of Gallilee who have accomplished this work; it was equally beyond the ability of all the men of the most cultivated minds upon earth. Other things, when they have been done once, may be imitated. When Columbus had discovered a new world beyond the Western Ocean, it was easy to sail to it again. But it is impossible to act over again the part of the Messiah and the Apostles. It could not be forged, and it cannot be imitated.

Let any set of men combine to write such a book as the Bible. Let their plan be laid so as to extend through a period of 1500 years. Let those who shall first enter upon the work get others to succeed them during that space of time. Let them write history, poetry, theology, and prophecies concerning the state of the world. Let them at length get one to come forward in whom all that they have written shall find its



accomplishment. Let him be born in the place they had fixed, of the family they had foretold, at the exact time they had predicted. Let him be exhibited in the most critical situations, in the midst of enlightened, powerful, and determined adversaries, while they still uphold him as perfect, and defy his enemies to prove the contrary. Let his own death be a part of their plan, which he himself shall foretel. Let a number of persons arise immediately afterwards to carry forward the design, charge the government under which he suffered as his murderers, affirm he is alive, and has given them convincing evidence that he will reward them in a future state. Let these men support their doctrine by an appeal to miracles openly wrought before enemies armed with civil power, and let them adhere to their testimony at the expence of life, and every thing dear in this world. Let them promulgate a new religion and code of laws completely subversive of every existing religion on earth, and directly opposed to the indulgence of the strongest passions of the human heart. Let this religion, by the force of its own evidence, win its way through the world; overthrow every opposing system; extend its triumphs, and finally stand its ground, in the most civilized countries, in



spite of the most learned adversaries. And let the character of the leader, as set forward by his associates, be thus vindicated as "the light of the nations." Who does not see the total impracticability, the absolute absurdity, of such an attempt? As soon might men of understanding be induced to undertake to climb up to the stars, as to propose to themselves such a scheme; yet all that has been thus supposed, has been accomplished in Jesus Christ.

The Jewish economy, when viewed superficially, and without reference to its design and consummation, appears in several points unmeaning and inexplicable. In this light many are accustomed to consider it. They look at it in broken and disjointed parts. The pompous appearance which it seems to assume, its priesthood and temple, its multiplied and costly sacrifices, its feasts, jubilees, and sabbatical years, the minuteness of its ritual observances, its various purifications, and distinctions of meats and days, seem to them to be evidently so strange and inexplicable, that it is not entitled to the smallest regard. The character of the Jewish people, which, delineated by the pen of inspiration, appears in its true colours, also disgusts their minds, and only tends to excite a proud self-preference. In this



manner, the wise are caught "in their own craftiness." Owing to the superficial attention which they give to it, combined with most culpable prejudice against the subject, only discordant and incongruous appearances present themselves, when, on a proper examination, all would be discovered to be one harmonious whole. A model only, it is true, of acknowledged imperfection, a scaffolding afterwards to be laid aside; but, taken in its proper character as "having a shadow of good things to come," divinely calculated to introduce and to attest the highest display of the power and the wisdom of God.

The man who never has considered the motions of the heavenly bodies, is entirely unacquainted with their order, discerns nothing in the face of the heavens by night but confused masses of luminous bodies, among which there is no appearance of any regularity and design. He, on the other hand, who has studied their laws, observed their order, and counted their number as far as they are visible, perceives the most striking indications of wisdom and arrangement. He is delighted with what he discovers, and smiles at that ignorance which, apart from the outward glare, sees nothing whatever to attract admiration. Just so it is in regard to the Old



Testament dispensation. It is capable of being seen in partial and distorted lights; but when properly attended to and understood, when viewed from the cross of Christ, in which its various parts unite and terminate, back through all its successive periods to its commencement, nothing can appear more orderly, more beautiful, more dignified. Its very outward form, taken as a whole, and as including so much of the character of God and of his law, has, to those who consider it, an imposing grandeur, which still arrests and overawes the nation of the Jews, who having yet the veil upon their hearts, cannot “stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.”

Owing, however, to these different points of light, in which the Mosaic dispensation may be viewed, it is not surprising that, instead of being considered as a complete attestation to the truth of the Christian religion, it should be seized on as an engine by which it is supposed the latter may be entirely subverted.

Mr Hume thinks it “strange, that the Egyptian religion, though so *absurd*, should yet have borne so great a resemblance to the Jewish, that ancient writers, even of the greatest genius, were not able to observe any difference betwixt them.”



“ For it is very remarkable,” he continues, “ that both Tacitus and Suetonius, when they mention that decree of the senate under Tiberius, by which the Egyptian and Jewish proselytes were banished from Rome, expressly treat these religions as the same; and it appears that even the decree itself was founded on that supposition.” “ These wise heathens,” he adds, “ observing something in the general air, and genius, and spirit of the two religions, to be the same, esteemed the differences of their dogmas too frivolous to deserve any notice.”

We have here an example of the manner in which such writers as Mr Hume take up a subject of the greatest importance, and of their superficial, unfair, and perverse representations, by which they blind themselves, and mislead others. The amount of what Mr Hume here brings forward, is, that the decree of the Roman senate to banish certain persons from Rome, *was framed solely for the object it had in view*, and did not enter into distinctions of foreign modes of worship, different from the state religion; and that Tacitus and Suetonius in their general histories, in relating this fact, *followed the same method*. Yet, with an air of gravity and surprise, he dwells on this circumstance, and represents these histo-



rians as “*not able* to observe any difference” betwixt the Jewish and Egyptian modes of worship. And, to heighten our wonder, he adds, that they were “*wise*” men, and writers of the “*greatest genius*.” If the stress is thus to be laid on the difficulty of the case, and these “*wise heathens*,” *if they ought to have made a distinction in their narration* respecting the Jewish and Egyptian religions, yet treat them “*as the same*,” it is “*strange*” indeed. For the Egyptian religion consisted in the worship of different kinds of animals, of insects, of leeks and of onions, and of the grossest and most ridiculous superstitions. “*You enter*,” says Lucian, “*into a magnificent temple, every part of which glitters with gold and silver; you then look attentively for a god, and are cheated with a stork, an ape, or a cat.*”

Such being the nature of the Egyptian religion, it is not necessary to shew the absurdity of supposing, that wise men, after *taking pains* to examine, (for this is Mr Hume’s *unfounded*, and consequently unfair representation, on which all the effect of his insinuation depends,) were not able to observe any difference betwixt it and the Jewish religion. But that they really were ignorant of the latter is not strange. Why should it be thought strange that Suetonius and Tacitus were



as ignorant as Mr Hume of a subject they had never examined, from which their prejudices kept them at the greatest distance? The aversion of Tacitus to the Jewish nation, and his want of accuracy in many circumstances that he relates concerning them, is well known. Speaking of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, he says, “most authors agree that a cutaneous disorder spreading through Egypt, King Bocchoris consulted the oracle of Hammon how to obtain relief. The answer was, that he should purge his kingdom, by expelling that race of men, (viz. the Jews,) who were so hateful to the gods.” In another place he assigns an entirely different reason for the same event. “Some say that, during the reign of Isis, when the population of Egypt exceeded its resources, a multitude was poured out into the neighbouring countries, under the conduct of Hierosolymus and Judah.”\* In the same manner we have his testimony to some circumstances relating to Israel while in the wilderness. Of the Jewish worship he gives in one place the following account. “The Jews believe only in one God, and worship him intel-

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\* Notwithstanding these different statements, it is worthy of remark, that the fact itself of the departure of the Israelites, is mentioned by Tacitus as a thing well known to historians.



lectually, considering those as profane who represent him by images, in as much as he is a Being supreme and eternal, immutable and unperishable; therefore there are *no images* either in their cities or in their temples." After this account, it might seem strange indeed that this wise heathen was "not able to observe any difference" between the religion of the Jews and that of the Egyptians, the latter of whom, Mr Hume informs us, were "worshippers of dogs, and adorers of cats and wolves." But this again will not appear so strange, when we observe that, in another place, Tacitus, in direct contradiction to himself, tells us, that when the people, (the Israelites,) were fainting with thirst in the desert, they were relieved with water by Moses, but that a herd of wild asses led him to it. In consequence of which, *the figure of that animal was, out of gratitude, consecrated by them in their temple.*

From the above specimens, we may appreciate the force of the inference which Mr Hume would have his readers to draw from the consideration, that ancient writers, even of the greatest genius, "were *not able* to observe any difference betwixt the Jewish and Egyptian religions." They may also teach the readers of Mr Hume's



Essays, what stress they ought to lay on the wisdom and accuracy, either of these ancient, or of this modern writer, on the subject of religion.

That such, however, should have been Mr Hume's views of the Mosaic dispensation, is not surprising, when we observe the light in which he viewed the gods and goddesses of the Heathen world. The whole mythological system, he thinks, is *so natural*, that it seems *more than probable* that somewhere or other it is really carried into execution. The *chief* objection to it, with regard to this world, is the want of evidence. "If," says Mr Hume, "we examine, without prejudice, the ancient Heathen mythology as contained in the poets, we shall not discover in it any such monstrous absurdity as we may be apt at first to apprehend. Where is the difficulty of conceiving, that the same powers or principles, whatever they were, which formed this visible world, men and animals, produced also a species of intelligent creatures, of more refined substance, and greater authority than the rest? That these creatures may be capricious, revengeful, passionate, voluptuous, is easily conceived; nor is any circumstance more apt amongst ourselves to engender such vices than the license of absolute authority. And, in short, the whole



mythological system is so natural, that, in the vast variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe, it seems more than probable that somewhere or other it is really carried into execution. The chief objection to it, with regard to this planet, is, that it is not ascertained by any just reason or authority."

To make any remark on the above extract is unnecessary ; to expose it as it deserves, impossible. If Mr Hume believed what he wrote, he was under "strong delusion," and is a warning to men of abilities of the danger which accompanies the perversion of their talents. If he did not believe it, we are reminded of what Solomon says of the man who casteth arrows, and firebrands, and death, and says, Am I not in sport ?

The immoral tendency of Mr Hume's writings, as well as their irreligion and profaneness, ought to be considered. The following summary (extracted from Dr Beattie's Essay on Truth) has been given of his doctrines, metaphysical and moral, to which might be added his justification of suicide.

### Of the Soul.

"That the soul of man is not the same this moment that it was the last ; that we know not



what it is; that it is not one, but many things; and that it is nothing at all.

“ That in this soul is the agency of all the causes that operate throughout the sensible creation; and yet that in this soul there is neither power, nor agency, nor any idea of either.

“ That matter and motion may often be regarded as the cause of thought.

### Of the Universe.

“ That the external world does not exist, or at least that its existence may reasonably be doubted.

“ That the universe exists in the mind, and that the mind does not exist.

“ That the universe is nothing but a heap of perceptions, without a substance.

“ That though a man could bring himself to believe, yea, and have reason to believe, that every thing in the universe proceeds from some cause; yet it would be unreasonable for him to believe that the universe itself proceeds from a cause.

### Of Human Knowledge.

“ That the perfection of human knowledge is to doubt.



“ That we ought to doubt of every thing, yea of our doubts themselves; and therefore the utmost that philosophy can do, is to give us a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts.

“ That the human understanding, acting alone, does entirely subvert itself, and prove by argument, that by argument nothing can be proved.

“ That man, in all his perceptions, actions, and volitions, is a mere passive machine, and has no separate existence of his own, being entirely made up of other things, of the existence of which he is by no means certain; and yet that the nature of all things depends so much upon man, that two and two could not be equal to four, nor fire produce heat, nor the sun light, without an act of the human understanding.

### Of God.

“ That it is unreasonable to believe God to be infinitely wise and good, while there is any evil or disorder in the universe.

“ That we have no good reason to think the universe proceeds from a cause.

“ That as the existence of the external world is questionable, we are at a loss to find argu-



ments by which we may prove the existence of the Supreme Being, or any of his attributes.

“ That when we speak of power as an attribute of any being, God himself not excepted, we use words without meaning.

“ That we can form no idea of power, nor of any being endued with power, *much less* of one endued with infinite power; and that we can never have reason to believe, that any object, or quality of any object, exists, of which we cannot form an idea.

### Of the Morality of Human Actions.

“ That every human action is necessary, and could not have been different from what it is.

“ That moral, intellectual, and corporeal virtues, are nearly of the same kind; in other words, that to want honesty, and to want understanding, and to want a leg, are equally the objects of moral disapprobation.

“ That adultery must be practised, if men would obtain all the advantages of life; that, if generally practised, it would in time cease to be scandalous; and that, if practised secretly and frequently, it would, by degrees, come to be thought no crime at all.



“ Lastly, as the soul of man, according to MR HUME, becomes every moment a different being, the consequence must be, that the crimes committed by him at one time, cannot be imputable to him at another.”

Mr Hume's own words respecting the religious principles which have prevailed in the world, are strikingly applicable to his sentiments on the gravest subjects. “ You will scarcely be persuaded that they are other than sick men's dreams; or, perhaps, will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkeys in human shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being, who dignifies himself with the name of rational.”

What Dr Reid has observed in exposing Mr Hume's scepticism with regard to Reason, may be truly affirmed of his unprincipled system, of which the above is a summary. “ It is some comfort that this doctrine can never be seriously adopted by any man in his senses.” \*

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\* Dr Reid, speaking of Mr Hume, says—“ Of all the paradoxes this author has advanced, there is not one more shocking to the human understanding than this, that things may begin to exist without a cause.”



By the perversion of reason, Mr Hume<sup>r</sup> reared his system of sceptical philosophy.\* And “after he had shewn,” says Dr Reid, “that ‘all the rules of logic require a total extinction of all belief and evidence,’ he himself, and all men that are not insane, must have believed many things, and yielded assent to the evidence which he had extinguished. This, indeed, he is so candid as to acknowledge. ‘He finds himself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life. And, since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, most fortunately it happens that nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures him of this philosophical melancholy and delirium.’ This was surely a very kind and friendly interposition of nature; for the effects of this philosophical delirium, if carried into life, must have been very melancholy.”\* And melancholy, beyond comparison,

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\* “A common symptom of delirium,” says Dr Reid, “is to think that all other men are fools or mad. This appears to have been the case of our author, who concluded, ‘That all those are certainly fools who reason or believe any thing.’ Dr Reid then goes on to expose Mr Hume’s “vain philosophy,” which he does in the clearest manner.—Reid *On the Intellectual Powers*, p. 699.



are the effects of carrying this same kind of scepticism into religion, although not so immediately perceived and felt. And after all, by renouncing religion on account of difficulties which he had nothing to do with, what superior light did Mr Hume attain? On the contrary, he involved himself in total darkness. In his case we are reminded of the declaration of the Apostle Paul respecting the Heathen philosophers. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." The confession with which he shuts up his enquiries on religion, is sufficiently humiliating to the pride of one who, pushing reason beyond its province, rejected abundant means of knowledge adapted to the present state and nature of man. "The whole," says he, "is a riddle, an ænigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspence of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject."

When men pervert the finest talents, and the most comprehensive powers of mind, and through prejudice, or ignorance, or both, ridicule and oppose that revelation which God in mercy has given, it is a humiliating proof how necessary Divine revelation is. Every one who reflects at all, must be sensible of his own weakness, and of his



precarious and dependent condition while in this world. He must be convinced that both his powers and information are very limited. He cannot, even as to this world, penetrate into futurity, and can only conjecture what shall afterwards happen to him while he continues in it. But with regard to that state to which his fathers are gone, and to which he is hastening, he knows nothing at all except information be given him. That information can only come from above. Every rational man then, instead of jesting and trifling on such a subject, or putting it far from him, should seriously examine the only religion that ever appeared in the world which bears any impression of being divine.

All other religions it is easy to trace to their origin, of fraud, imposture, or of corrupted tradition. The Christian religion, accompanied by the most direct and incontrovertible historical proofs, draws an accession of evidence from every conceivable source. We have seen it taking its rise from the fall of man, and proceeding forward on a uniform plan. Confined for a long period to one particular nation, it supports among them just and consistent views of the worship of God; while all the rest of the world were buried in darkness. We have observed it breaking forth



at length on every side, and by its own convincing evidence, unaided by power or learning, obliging the whole civilized world, in spite of its most determined opposition, at least to put on its outward form. The facts on which it rests are attested both by friends and enemies, and persons indifferent to it, and are not contradicted by any. If ever there were reasonable and strong grounds to engage serious enquiry, these must be allowed to be so.

This religion is exactly adapted to man in his present state. Every other system lowers the Divine perfections, and extenuates what is wrong in the character of man. The Scriptures alone at once discover the deadly disease of sin, and exhibit the perfect cure. They reveal the character of God in all the awful majesty of holiness and justice, as well as of goodness. Sin shall not dwell with him. They present his law, the transcript of his character, holy, just, and good. Not one tittle of its requirements do they relax or let down. On the contrary, they point out the spirituality and extent of that holy law, and say *all* must be fulfilled. Bringing the character of man to the test of its requirements, they charge the whole world as guilty before God.



To fix this guilt upon the conscience of every individual, the Scriptures enter into minute details. They exhibit human nature in every possible shape, sometimes in histories of the best and sometimes of the worst men—of men of all descriptions, and of every rank in life,—of the learned and the unlearned,—of the barbarous and the civilized. They not only treat of outward conduct, but enter into the most hidden recesses of the heart, shewing that where there is a fair outside, all within may be hollow and corrupt. “Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemies, pride, foolishness.” Such is the catalogue of evils which they represent as lodging within the heart, and which, coming from within, defile the man. This accounts for all that disorder, mischief, quarrelling, war, and bloodshed, in the world, arising from men’s natural enmity against each other, so easily blown into a flame, and with such difficulty allayed. But above all, the Scriptures teach the total alienation of the heart from God. This is the grand evil, the deadly malady of human nature, ever since sin appeared in the world. Hence the evil heart of unbelief. The Scriptures therefore explicitly



inform us, that all men in their natural condition are, without exception, "guilty," "condemned," "by nature the children of wrath," "alienated from God and enemies by wicked works." "There is none righteous, no not one." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Such is the character which the word of God has drawn of man, and which is given no where else. It goes to the root. It probes the evil to the bottom; but it is not in order to torment him before the time. The gracious design is to renovate and to relieve. Presenting this picture of human depravity in the one hand, in the other it exhibits the love and the mercy of God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." The dignity of this Redeemer, "Immanuel, God with us," forbids the indulgence of one desponding thought in regard to his ability to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Appearing in the nature of man, he has rendered a perfect and meritorious obedience to the law of God, and has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chas-



tisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Thus, by his atonement, "he hath finished transgression, and brought in an everlasting righteousness." In his blood is "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Here is "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," and flowing once more into this guilty world.

This is the foundation laid for the free and compassionate invitations of the Gospel. Thus God brings near his righteousness: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people."—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you



rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”—“ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

As the glory and the dignity of the Son of God give the fullest assurance of his *ability* to save even the chief of sinners; so these gracious invitations, and every part of his character and conduct, fully displayed in his history, furnish equal assurance of his *willingness* to receive all who come to him. Of this, as well as of his power, he gave a most encouraging representation, in healing the bodily diseases, however malignant, of every one, without a single exception, that ever applied to him for a cure.

In this salvation, the Almighty appears “ the just God and the Saviour.” His law was broken: its honours must be restored, and sin punished. Justice and mercy must go hand in hand. Hence, without shedding of blood there could be no remission; but atonement being made, every obstacle to the pardon and acceptance of the guilty is removed.

The covenant of salvation, ratified in the blood



of the Redeemer, is ordered in all things and sure. Included in its provisions is the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit. The word of God is "the sword" of the Spirit, the instrument by which he performs his work. The Holy Spirit communicates himself to the soul through faith, which is the gift of God. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*"

The sinner, who was "dead in trespasses and sins," is thus "quickened." The subject of this divine change is born again of the Spirit; the enmity of the heart to God and his doctrine is removed, and the believer is "a new creature." The union is in this manner formed with the Saviour, *who dwells in his people's hearts by faith.* With respect to such, he sees of the travail of his soul: His Spirit has been sent forth into their hearts, and his supplication as to them is answered, which he put up when he prayed, not for the Apostles alone, but for them also who should believe in him through their word, that



they all might be one. “As,” said he, “thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ;—I in them, and thou in me.” Thus they are sons by adoption in the family of God, and sons also by birth,—“the children of God; and, if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” Being justified by faith, they have peace with God. A holy reconciliation has succeeded to that state of enmity and rebellion in which they formerly lived. In this way, every idea of good works in order to justification is excluded.

The Apostle Paul having shewn at large, that all the world is guilty before God; that, by the deeds of the law, no flesh living shall be justified; and that, in respect to their need of justification by the righteousness which God has provided, there is “*no difference*” among men, proceeds to prove, that Abraham (accounted one of the holiest of men) was justified only on this footing. If he had done any work to entitle him to reward, reward would have been given to him of *debt*, not of *grace*. But he received it of grace, the only footing, from first to last, on which the Gospel proceeds. “For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was count-



ed unto him for righteousness. Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*." Thus they are the *ungodly* whom God justifieth, and not persons who, by their doings or works more or less, dream of making themselves fit for an interest in Christ: "I came not," says Jesus, "to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance."—"There is none righteous, *no not one*."

In this salvation every thing being "finished," man cannot, and is not required, to add any thing to it. He therefore enters into the enjoyment of all its blessings by faith. "Now faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." It is the conviction of the truth or reality of what is testified and of what is hoped for, the testimony presenting an object of hope.

When a truth testified to us is believed, there are two distinct operations in the mind. The one is a perception or comprehension of the meaning of the declaration made. The other is the persuasion of its truth. A man on whose



veracity we depend, relates to us a fact. If we understand what he relates, we believe him in the complete sense. But if we rely on his veracity, yet misunderstand what he testifies, in one sense we believe him, in another we do not. In this way, many of those who saw the wonderful works of Jesus, believed for a while that he was the Messiah; but they had formed an erroneous idea of the Messiah, and therefore, when afterwards they understood his doctrine, they forsook him, being convinced that he was not the Messiah. Thus the Jews believed that Moses was divinely inspired, and that the Old Testament Scriptures were the word of God. They therefore trusted in Moses, and they thought that in the Scriptures they had eternal life. But they mistook their contents, and what Moses taught; and therefore the Lord declares, that *they did not believe* Moses in whom they trusted. In the same manner King Agrippa believed the prophets, but in the full and proper sense he did not believe them. And thus Simon Magus and others believed. In the parable of the sower, according to the usual manner of speaking, all the four descriptions of persons are represented as believing. But it was only the last description who, strictly speaking, believed. For, in



the explanation of the parable, they only are represented as *understanding* the word. In like manner, many who take the name of Christian believe the Bible to be the book of God, and they believe something which they suppose to be its meaning. But they misunderstand its meaning, and therefore they *do not believe it*.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith forms the union, and is the medium of communication with the unseen Saviour, and except through him there can be no fellowship between God and a sinner. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; *no man cometh to the Father but by me.*" Before this union is formed, there is nothing good or acceptable in man in the sight of God.

The case of Cornelius is sometimes adduced to prove that the prayers and alms of men not addressing God through the gospel, come up for a memorial before God; and that persons who are ignorant of it, may work righteousness which is accepted by him.\* But this proceeds from a mis-

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\* What Peter says of not respecting persons, and that in every nation he that feareth, &c. refers to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Acts x. 34, 35.



taken view of the passage in scripture, where Cornelius is spoken of. From the first promise to Adam, the true worshippers of God approached him through the gospel, which was first proclaimed to Adam. On every other ground they were rejected. “By *faith*, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” The sacrifice of animals was a representation of the sacrifice of Christ; and the offering of them implied a confession of guilt, and a reliance on that substitution which God would provide. Whoever lost sight of this, was not a spiritual and acceptable worshipper. By the Mosaic dispensation, and by the spirit of prophecy given to Israel, an increase of light was vouchsafed. Many, through the means that were thus afforded, worshipped God in spirit and in truth before the coming of the Messiah; and whoever did so, was accepted by him. All others, except such as retained the knowledge of God through tradition, worshipped a god of their own imagination. We accordingly find, that the Apostles addressed the Gentiles who were converted, as persons who had been formerly without God, and without hope. “At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,



and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

If this be the fact, according to the uniform tenor of scripture, and if no example to the contrary can be shewn, it remains for those who speak of Cornelius as ignorant of the promised salvation to shew that he was so. And as the case of one in that situation, being notwithstanding an acceptable worshipper, would be completely anomalous, it would require very clear proof. But there is not the shadow of proof of this, or any ground on which to ascertain that he did not worship the true God of Israel.

Cornelius lived near to Jerusalem, and had, it appears, intercourse with the people of Israel. He was of good report among all the nation of the Jews; and it is repeatedly noted, that he fasted and prayed at the ninth hour, which was the hour of offering the evening sacrifice, and one of the stated hours of prayer. He thus looked towards God's holy temple. He worshipped God as Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and as Simeon, and Anna, and all those who waited for the consolation of Israel. Besides, Cornelius, as we see from Acts x. 36, knew the word which God sent to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, although it had not



been hitherto addressed to the Gentiles. Till Peter went to him, Jesus had not been preached to *them* as the Messiah. Before this, it was only necessary for them to believe in the Messiah to come; but after he did come, and was proclaimed to Gentiles as well as to Jews, then it was indispensable that they should believe that Jesus was the Christ. Accordingly, Cornelius was informed by the Angel, that the person he was directed to send for, would tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. This does not imply that he was not accepted before; but now, as God had vouchsafed further light, and given a further command, it was indispensably necessary that he should receive and obey it; just as it is necessary for any believer to obey the will of God, in any part which he had not known before, as soon as he understands it.

Cornelius was a spiritual worshipper of God under the old dispensation; who, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, and many others, was waiting for the Messiah, who, when he should come, "was to tell his people all things," and who was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed." All in Israel, and others besides, pro-



fessed to be looking and waiting for the Messiah. But his appearing was to be the touchstone. It would shew who should abide the day of his coming, and who should stand when he appeared; for he should be like a refiner's fire. The case of Cornelius, then, forms no exception to that universal truth, which the Scriptures declare, of the way in which man shall be just with God.

All men, ever since the fall, are, by nature, sinners and rebels against God. As born of Adam, who was overcome by Satan, and imbibed his poison, they are of their father the devil, who, from his power and influence, is called "the God of this world." Their judgment is perverted, their passions disordered, and, with strong propensities to evil, they have neither the fear nor the love of God. This is what is called in scripture, the carnal mind, which is enmity to God, and not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. In this condition, they cannot please God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him."

From the remains of the law in men's hearts; from their conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being; from an idea of a state of future



retribution impressed on their minds, (especially when these impressions are strengthened by what they have heard from the Scriptures); from a strong desire of mutual approbation; from original feelings in their nature; and from various restraints, as of regard to character, self interest, and many such considerations under which their circumstances place them, men, in the use of the natural faculties of their minds, do many things which, considered only in themselves, are good and praise-worthy actions. But to constitute an action essentially good, it must not only be good in itself, but must flow from a proper motive, and be directed to a proper end. An act of justice or benevolence to a fellow creature is good in itself, and differs very much from one that is of a contrary description. If it spring from a desire of doing what is right, and with a design to relieve a fellow creature's wants, or to promote his welfare, it is also good in a subordinate motive and end. Still something essential is wanting. A spirit of obedience to God, and a desire to promote his glory, ought, in every thing, to influence all his rational creatures. If, then, the man who has done this action be ignorant of God, and opposed to his true character and perfections, (as every one is who rejects the gospel)



the grand ultimate motive and end were both wanting. When strictly examined, therefore, it is not essentially a good action. *It is the action of a rebel*; which, under the righteous or just government of God, never can be acknowledged as good or acceptable. The action of a rebel would not be acknowledged and rewarded even by any of the imperfect governments of this world. A man's person must be accepted before his services can be acknowledged. When an Israelite was unclean, he was first to be purified, and then he was to present his offering as the law prescribed. Although, then, this man may have benefited his fellow creature, and pleased his own partial conscience, (partial to himself, and also in its information,) he cannot be rewarded by God for what he has done. Besides, some hidden evil, pride, vanity, or something of the same kind, may have mixed with this action. And what shall remove its guilt?

But whatever good might be in such an action, it could at best only answer for itself. It could not expiate former sin and short-coming, Neither can repentance do these away. We do not find that repentance averts natural evils which we have brought on ourselves. If a man repents of his past conduct, it may prevent him



from repeating the same things, but it cannot alter what is past. If a man spends his fortune, or cuts off his hand, repentance will not restore either. If he breaks the laws of the land, repentance will not avert punishment. The offering of sacrifice was a solemn declaration of the conviction of the offerer, that repentance could not remove guilt.

The best actions of a man, before he is reconciled to God, cannot be acceptable to God. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." And if his best actions be not acceptable, what must be the case in respect to those many things in which, unless his conscience be seared as with a hot iron, he must condemn himself?

Although justification be solely by faith, and till a man be justified he can do nothing acceptable to God; yet from that time good works, in other words, obedience to God, are absolutely necessary. On this the Scriptures insist in the most peremptory manner, and declare not only that works will be appealed to at last as the proof of justification, but that they will also be taken as a measure of the reward to be adjudged. They shall be "judged every man according to their works," and "every man shall



receive his own reward, according to his own labour.”—“ Without holiness, then, no man shall see the Lord.”

“ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”—“ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”—“ Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”—“ If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—“ They that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”—“ Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”—“ Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”—“ For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”—“ I saw



the dead, small and great, stand before God,—and they were judged every man according to their works.”

Between such declarations, and those already quoted, which shew that salvation is all of grace, and that men are not saved by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, there may appear at first sight to be a contradiction, but there is none. The great end of the Gospel is to glorify God, by illustrating his perfections of wisdom, holiness, justice and mercy, in restoring his image to the soul of man, ruined and dead in sin. It never could be imagined, that although a man makes his son his heir to his estate and fortune, not on account of his obedience or good works, but because he is his son, and he loves him, that therefore his son is released from all obligation to obey his father. In like manner, it cannot be supposed that because a man is freely pardoned on account of what Christ has done, and is adopted as a Son of God, that this should give him a license to continue in sin, and release him from the duty of obedience to God. On the contrary, new and strong obligations are thus laid on him, and new



motives of the most powerful kind are given to serve God. He has been ransomed with a price of blood, brought from a state of condemnation and misery, has received a free pardon, is adopted into the family of God, has been made a son of God, and a joint heir with Christ of a most glorious inheritance.

This grace of God, then, which has appeared to him, providing both for the *acceptance* and for the reward of his obedience, is in itself in every respect *holy*, and its whole tendency is *holy*. It therefore “teaches him, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly,” in expectation of the full possession of the blessings set before him at the glorious appearing of his Lord and Saviour. Every thing in the Gospel is conducive to his sanctification. The view he has received of Christ dying for his sins, and of the perfect law of God, just in as far as he discerns these truths, humbles him, and brings down that proud independence of Spirit, which formerly prevented him from submitting to God. God, according to his promise, has put his fear in his heart, that he may not depart from him, and that he may serve him with reverence; for to the workers of iniquity God is a consuming fire. In proportion to his



faith, he is filled with love and gratitude to God; and being brought to know his proper place, both as the creature of God, and as his son, he is convinced of the duty and necessity of yielding obedience, in order to that communion with God to which he has been called by the grace of the Gospel. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. And no creature of God can hold fellowship with him, unless he submit to him. Ungodly men may turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, but in every respect the Gospel is a doctrine according to Godliness. Its language, its operation, is “**HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.**”—“As he which hath called you is *holy*, so be ye *holy* in all manner of conversation.”

The Holy Spirit carries on this work of sanctification in the soul, by means of his word and of his providential dispensations, through which he gradually enlightens, humbles, purifies, invigorates, and actuates the soul which he inhabits, and in which Christ dwells by faith. Thus the word of God worketh effectually in those who believe. The Gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” The Gospel bringeth forth fruit in every man from the day he hears it, and knows the grace of God in truth. God fulfils his gracious promise of “sub-



duing the iniquities" of his people, whom he "hath from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

Every thing is thus put, by the Gospel, into its proper place, and good works, instead of being represented as the *cause* of salvation, are the necessary *effect* of it,—the fruit of the Spirit of Christ. "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of *faith unfeigned*." This last is the root of the whole, and a pure heart, and love with its fruits, are its effects. In another place it is said, "purifying their hearts *by faith*," Jesus Christ is made unto his people "sanctification."—"He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The whole progress of grace is strikingly summed up in the following passages, which trace it to the love of God its source, in that proper order which men are ever prone to invert. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy



and without blame before Him in love.—But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. By grace ye are saved.—For by grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” And, to the same purpose, “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified.”

The effect which flows from this view of the grace of God, is beautifully and strikingly declared by the Apostle in the words that follow: “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is



Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." In another place, the same Apostle says, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

We see then the place which the Scriptures assign to good works, and also their source, and that being fully provided for in the covenant of God, they are indispensably necessary to salvation. "Blessed are they that do his command-



ments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." But these works proceed from faith. They are called "the work of faith,"—"the obedience of faith." They are the way in which faith acts, exerts, and discovers itself, and by which it is perfected. They are the fruit of the Spirit, which must exist and be manifested wherever the Spirit is; and they who have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his. They are "the fruits of righteousness, which are *through* Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Believers are represented as the branches in Christ the true vine, but "severed from him they can do *nothing*." Keeping this indissoluble connection between faith and works in view, those who are justified by faith are, in a secondary sense, justified by works, which are the fruits and evidences of their union with Christ. For while the righteousness of God, wrought by Christ, revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith, is that by which alone men are constituted righteous, the fruits they produce are the token, proof, and requisite effect of that union, which must be produced to verify it, and to manifest its efficiency.



A man who is tried in a court of law is not justified there by his innocence of the crime laid to his charge : his innocence *constitutes his real justification*, which would not be effected even were he condemned by the court ; but he is there justified by the evidences that are produced to attest his innocence. Abraham was justified by faith when he believed God ; afterwards he was justified by works, when, as the Apostle James informs us, he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar : “ Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.” So far was this from being contrary to the declaration of Scripture (on which the Apostle Paul has grounded the doctrine of justification by faith), which saith, that “ Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness,” that that declaration was then fulfilled, or verified and confirmed ; and it was shewn, that by faith he had been constituted righteous, as thus appeared in his conduct. What Abraham performed did not make him obedient, but proved that he was obedient. A bad tree cannot bear good fruit, and no man can do a good work till he himself be first made good. On the other hand, where there is no obedience or “ work of



faith," there is no faith. A man may *say* he has faith; but, according to the Apostle James, the mere profession of faith is no more faith than the body without the spirit or breath is a man; or than saying to one who is naked and destitute of daily food, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving what is needful, is compassion. It is indeed the appearance of compassion; it is *saying* we have compassion.

The above passage of James has been used as a handle, by those who oppose the doctrine of justification by faith, to prove, that on this subject there is a discrepancy between him and the Apostle Paul. But for this there is no ground whatever. Both of them teach the same doctrine, and what is said by each of them is of the last importance. The Apostle Paul, where, using the word "justification" in its full and primary sense, he establishes the doctrine of justification solely by faith, also uses the word "justification" in the same sense in which the Apostle James uses it. Speaking of God, he says, "that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings." Every one must at once perceive, that the word "justified" is here used in its secondary sense.

In the representation given by our Lord of



the last judgment, it is to be observed, that all the good works of the righteous are such as proceed from “faith which worketh by love :”—“I was an hungred and ye gave me meat,” &c. “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *my brethren*, ye have done it unto me.” It is material to recollect, that Jesus calls none his brethren but those whom he sanctifieth, who are conformed to his image, and with whom he is one. “Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.*” The Lord, therefore, here refers to the fruits of love to his disciples *as such*.

This love the Apostle John declares to be a decisive test of conversion to God. “Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.”—“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Entirely in consistency with this, is the sentence pronounced on those who are condemned : “I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat.”—“Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of *these*, ye did it not to me.” They may have relieved the disciples of Jesus, but they never did so *because* they were his dis-



ciples. Nor was this possible without faith. Having neglected the message of reconciliation, through the reception of which alone they could have been sanctified and made acceptable to God, they continued rebels against his government. Accordingly, not one good work is ascribed to them, although no doubt many of them, from principles of humanity, and from sympathetic feelings for distress, fed the hungry and clothed the naked. On the other hand, in the above representation, there is no defect in their works charged on the righteous. Whoever gave a cup of cold water to a disciple *in the name of a disciple*, as this shewed his allegiance to Christ, shall in nowise lose his reward.

All shall on that day be judged on the strictest principles of justice. Those who refused to submit to the government of God shall be condemned, on account of their breaking his holy law. The righteous had also broken it; but they had fled to the refuge set before them in the Gospel, and, confessing themselves to be sinners, and renouncing every idea of their own righteousness, had taken the benefit of that atonement and righteousness which God had provided. While, therefore, their works which proceeded from faith are acknowledged as the evidence and fruits of their interest in the right-



eousness of Christ, and the measure of their reward, it is not *on account* of their works that they are accepted of God and acquitted.

“What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” was asked of the Apostle John, when he beheld a great multitude that stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. “These,” replied an inhabitant of the heavenly world, “are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; THEREFORE (on this account) are they before the throne of God.” In another place it is said, that it was Jesus who washed them: “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” He counsels the church at Laodicea to buy of him white raiment, and what is bought from him is “without money and without price.” These white robes are again said to be *given* to them by Jesus. “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice,



saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were *given* unto every one of them.”—“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, *these are the true sayings of God.*”

It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the objection so often made, that the doctrine of justification by faith is unfriendly to good works, the world still entertains some latent idea, that this, after all, is not the case. It is certain they judge those who hold that doctrine by a stricter rule than they do others, more narrowly observe their conduct, and, when they act in any respect inconsistently with the law of God, more loudly condemn them. This appears to arise from an opinion, that their conduct is inconsistent, not merely with their profession, but also with their principles. It is therefore an involuntary tribute to those principles. Christians are very



far from being what they ought to be. This proceeds from the weakness of their faith. Still their conduct, on the whole, condemns the world, and testifies that its deeds are evil; and this creates more uneasiness and more dislike to them than is always acknowledged.

How great is the salvation of the Gospel! How honourable to the character of God, and how suitable to the circumstances of man! Providing a perfect obedience to the law of God, as well as full satisfaction for the breach of it, the Gospel addresses man as a transgressor, and therefore as condemned already. In this situation, it assures him, that, while in unbelief, he can render no acceptable obedience to God, and can do nothing to recommend himself to him. “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that *believe*.”

Had not provision been made suitable to men *as guilty*, not one of the human race could have been saved. The Gospel tells man, that sin has cut off all friendly communication between him and his Creator, and that there is only one way in which it can be restored. The mediation of



Jesus Christ is that way which, in making reconciliation, maintains the holiness of God and the honour of his law. If, therefore, men come to God in this way, they are certain they shall be accepted. They may and ought to come "in the full assurance of faith." They have "boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Christ." But if they attempt to come in any other way,—on the footing of their own repentance, sincerity, amendment, or good works, or partly on these and partly on what Christ has done, they are rejected. Those who do not receive the Gospel may think this an over-nice distinction, and that alternatives so important as eternal misery or blessedness, cannot hang upon it. But it is a distinction of the broadest and most important kind. That faith by which a man comes to God by Christ alone, includes a discernment of things as they really are,—of himself as guilty and *ruined* by sin,—of the spotless purity and infinite justice of God, who cannot look on sin,—of the perfection of his law, and of the perfection of the work of Christ, to which nothing can be added. By the man who attempts to come to God, resting *partly*, in however small a degree, on something in himself, all these realities are changed. A *limitation* is introduced respect-



ing each and all of them ; and, of course, the character of *infinite*, which belongs to every one of them, is lost. When this is taken away, their nature is radically altered, as much as it would alter the idea of eternal duration, if any limit, however remote, was assigned to it. “ To him, then, that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”—“ So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”—“ For the *wages* of sin is death, but the FREE GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The plan of salvation is a plan of mercy. If all men were justly involved in condemnation, justice could not require their deliverance. If mercy interposed, none of those who were justly condemned could complain if it was not extended to them. Mercy must act freely, and select its objects. The mercy, however, of a perfect Being, must always act in consistency with justice. If mercy be extended to those who are, according to justice condemned, they must be according to justice acquitted. The plan of mercy is therefore conducted according to justice. Hence the necessity for the atonement and obedience of Christ, and that his work should be a “ finished work”—in every respect perfect. It



therefore admits of no addition. If sinners obtain any thing, it must be by *gift*. It is out of his fulness that all receive. Through Christ, believers have access into this grace wherein they stand. Until they believe, they are *ungodly*; when they believe they are justified, and have peace with God. They are one with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection, and partakers of his sufferings and glory. HE, and he only, saves from sin and from its fatal effects. The means through which men should be interested in his salvation, he alone had a right to determine. “Go ye,” said the Lord, “to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, and whom it is vain to attempt to resist—” Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved, but he that *believeth not* shall be damned.”

Such is the inveterate malady of sin, and so obdurate is the human heart under its influence, that multitudes who hear of this salvation of the gospel turn from it with contempt. The greatest insensibility to his real condition marks man’s character in his natural state. Although a slave to Satan, and led captive by him, he boasts of his liberty, and of his ability to justify himself before God. He brings down the law of God to his own standard; and, instead of admitting his



guilt and depravity, he gently styles himself “an imperfect creature.” He “cannot believe that perfect obedience can be required from such a one.” He measures himself by others around him. “Of God he hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require it.” And he readily listens to the artful and incessant suggestion of Satan, which he employed with such success when he brought ruin upon the world—“*Ye shall not surely die.*” There are various ways in which those who are favoured with the light of the gospel reject the counsel of God against themselves. By many who take the name of Christians, it is **PERVERTED**, or **ABUSED**, or **NEGLECTED**, or **OPPOSED**. But in every age, there are others who **RECEIVE** it, to whom the Gospel proves the power of God unto salvation.

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ONE class of persons who profess to receive the Gospel, and who imagine that they actually do so, **PERVERT** and wrest it to their own destruction. Their view of the Gospel is, that Christ having brought all men into a salvable state, they have to prepare themselves by repentance and reformation, and to make themselves in some measure worthy of him; and that thus, on the



footing of "sincere, though imperfect obedience," they will make their peace with God, they doing their part, in consequence of which God will do his. This error, so fatal and so common, proceeds on the radical mistake of such persons respecting their own character, the character of God, and of his law. It is the self-righteous working of the depraved human heart, ignorant of its real condition, blinded and stupified by sin, and daring to present to God, in order to justification, an "imperfect," that is, a polluted obedience. Such persons abound wherever the Gospel is made known. They are like the Israelites of old, over whose rejection of the Gospel Paul so feelingly lamented, while he bore them witness that they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone."

In the system of these persons, the whole order of the Gospel is reversed. Something good



is supposed by them to exist in their heart, upon which the grace of God, according to their undefined idea of grace, will work when they have *done their part*. They entertain a most erroneous idea of the justice of God, and of the extent of his law, supposing that, consistently with his character, he may relax and lower it to their imperfection. From these radical mistakes, they are led to a false view of justification, in order to obtain which, they suppose they must do something, and must, in some measure, qualify themselves for it. When having become so far good and worthy, God, they imagine, will justify and accept them, partly on this account, and partly on account of what has been done by his Son. Thus, the obedience of Jesus Christ is brought in to make up what is wanting in their own obedience. Not only do they suppose that in this way they begin the Christian life, but that in this same order they must proceed all along. That view of justification by faith, which the Scriptures so carefully inculcate, which admits not of any thing like working, more or less, in order to obtain it, appears to them "foolishness." Yet the word of God, speaking of the election of grace, expressly declares, "if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of



works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work." Surely this is evident. These two ideas cannot be mixed. This passage of Scripture is equally explicit with that one already quoted : " to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that *justifieth the ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness. Therefore," says the Apostle, " it is of faith, that it might be by grace."

The influence, too, of the Spirit, and " the election of grace," so explicitly taught in the Scriptures, which stand in indissoluble connection with each other, as well as with the doctrine of human depravity, are opposed by the persons referred to as enthusiasm. They imagine that when the Apostles speak of election, it is only national election they mean ; and that when they speak of the operations of the spirit, they refer only to his miraculous gifts in the first ages, and therefore that they do not apply to Christians now. Just as they imagine, that when the word of God speaks of the law, it refers only to the ceremonial law of Moses. They suppose too that men are not all in a state of the *same* condemnation before they believe the Gospel (although the Scriptures explicitly say " there is no difference") and that " good decent people" come to be reconciled to God on a different footing from such as



the thief on the cross. This view of the Gospel changes it into another gospel, which is neither law nor gospel. It has often, however, considerable effects on persons who hold it. It leads them like Herod, when he gladly heard John the Baptist, to "do many things." It also often connects with a great degree of strictness in their profession of religion; and, like the "devout women," of whom we read in the book of Acts, who persecuted the Apostles, they are very devout in their way. Their works spring from self-righteous, self-justifying views; their devoutness from a zeal of God without knowledge. The heart, in the mean time, continues unchanged; and this ensnaring system, so congenial to the pride and depravity of the human mind, tends not to humble but to puff up.

People of the world have discernment enough to perceive, that this kind of religion does not spring from submissive acquiescence in the sovereignty of God, and humbling views of the state of the heart, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Accordingly, those who profess it, as far as their religion is concerned enjoy the friendship of the world. They are one with it in its maxims and "vain conversation." The love of the world, in all its more decent forms,



possesses their minds. Thus "they are of the world," and any opposition from it on account of the cross of Christ, they never experienced. From want of discernment of the nature of the Gospel, they, on the other hand, suppose that people in general are Christians, because they take the name of Christian, and live in what is called a Christian country. Thus, with a form of false religion which imposes on themselves, they remain under the influence of Satan, and at enmity with God.

Persons who entertain the views of the Gospel above described, are in general strongly fortified in their self-righteous system. "The strong man armed," keeps their hearts secure, and with much form of devotion, none are more opposed to Godliness. They are quite sincere in their perverted opinions, and often plead this sincerity as if that would avail should they prove at last to be in an error. The Apostle Paul was also *sincere* when he "verily thought" that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." But afterwards, when the Lord had revealed himself to him, he acknowledged that he had been then a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." These persons should consider



that such is the nature of the Gospel, that what may appear to them to be a very small error respecting it, either in the way of addition, or of inverting the order of any of its parts, will make it void altogether, and involve the most fatal consequences. They should remember the early example of Cain and Abel. Both presented their offerings to God. But the one through faith did it according to the order prescribed, and was accepted; the other approached in a different way, and was rejected. They should observe with what earnestness the Apostle Paul contends against that error which had crept into the churches of Galatia respecting circumcision. This might seem a small matter, but it was in fact subversive of the Gospel, as every erroneous system, however nearly resembling it, is. All other systems leave men in their guilty condemned state, at enmity with God. The Gospel, which gives the true view of the character of God, and of the effectual remedy for sin which he has provided, is alone capable of *reconciling the heart* to God. The Apostle, therefore, assures the Galatians, that if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing. This would be adding something to the Gospel, and prove they did not understand it. Accordingly, with the greatest earnestness, he warns



them against receiving another gospel, which he declares could not be another, and that if either he or an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than what he had formerly preached to them, he was to be held "accursed."

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul dwells at large on the Gospel, and states, in the fullest manner, those doctrines which are most offensive to the pride of the human heart, and which directly oppose every self-righteous principle. On this account, the persons in question are generally prejudiced against this part of Scripture. They prefer the discourses of Jesus Christ himself, as being in their estimation more plain and practical. Thus they set one part of Scripture against another, not considering that the whole is equally the word of God. And that the reason why the contents of the four Gospels appear more plain is, that while all which is said in them proceeds exactly on the same foundation as is laid down in Paul's Epistles, the great distinguishing principles of the Gospel were not, in the period they relate to, so fully brought forward. Just before he left his disciples, Jesus told them that he had yet *many things* to say to them, but they could not bear them then. After his resurrection from the dead, and



when the Spirit was poured out, the great atonement being then made, and every thing perfected, he fully instructed them in the nature of his kingdom and doctrine. From that period, "*Christ spake by the Apostles.*"

The following passage of the Apostle Peter is often quoted as an excuse for not attending more to Paul's Epistles : " And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you. As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things in which \* are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." But this passage ought rather to be viewed as a *warning* by all who dislike Paul's Epistles, because they contain some things that are contrary to their preconceived opinions and proud imaginations. Such being "unlearned," that is untaught, or unteachable, in the doctrine of Christ, (averse to the truth,) they wrest, torture, or pervert, from their proper meaning, those

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\* "In which *things*," (referring to the subject, not to the Epistles,) "some things are hard," &c.



writings, *as they do also the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction. But “they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.” (Prov. viii. 9.)

When read with a humble teachable disposition, and without improper deference to human guides, the meaning of the word of God is very obvious, and the doctrine taught in it most kindly and happily adapted to human weakness. The period of the dispensations of God is now arrived, concerning which it was foretold in ancient prophecy, that “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days.” When “an highway shall be there,—the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Many of the most learned of this world, have stumbled and fallen at the writings of Paul; while others, without any of their attainments, feed on them as the word of life. “I thank thee,” said Jesus, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” It is necessary to remind those persons who garble and pervert the Scriptures, and who see very well that there are parts



of the word of God which, according to their obvious meaning, stand opposed to their system, of that solemn declaration of Jesus Christ, “Except ye be converted, and *become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.

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THERE is another class of persons who ABUSE the Gospel. They profess to receive it, but are evidently not walking according to it. Such persons are described in Scripture as having a form of Godliness, but denying its power. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him. They are hearers, but not doers of the word. They listen to the Gospel “as a very lively song,” and “sit before God as his people do, and hear his words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.”

That these persons labour under some radical mistake respecting the Gospel, although it may not be possible for others to discover where it lies, is most certain; for faith and works are, in the covenant of God, indissolubly connected. The Gospel bringeth forth fruit in every man, from the day he hears it, and knows the grace of God in truth. Such persons, therefore, do



not believe the Gospel, but hold something else that seems to resemble it. Their hearts remain unchanged and unpurified. The love of the world, in one form or other, possesses their minds. They are ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. They appear to be branches in the true vine, but they are not united to it. There is some unperceived flaw which separates them from it, so that they receive no sap and nourishment, and therefore bring forth no fruit to perfection; while the true branches are pruned that they may bear more fruit, these will at last be cut off and burnt.

This case is explained by the parable of the sower, in which there are three sets of persons on whom the word for a season had certain effects; but at last they fell away, for they never "understood" it. Another view of the same case is given in the parable of the ten virgins, which represents such people as maintaining a profession to the last. This parable is of a very arousing nature. It describes the kingdom of heaven. It represents the ten virgins as all having lamps—a profession of religion and decency of conduct, which made them so much resemble each other, that none were suspected by the rest. None of them even suspect-



ed themselves. They were all waiting for the bridegroom, although part of them laboured under a mistake respecting his character. He neither knew them, nor was he known of them. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept,—they were all in a state of security, some on solid and others on false grounds. At length he came, but five of them were not in a fit condition to go out to meet him, for they had no oil in their lamps. Their profession was vain. A radical defect was then discovered. The others entered into the marriage supper, and these were excluded. This appears to be a case of the strongest kind. It may seldom happen that such persons at no period suspect themselves; but they may at one time have had joy from something they believed, and may afterwards have rested upon it, and lulled themselves into false security. Their situation, on the whole, is peculiarly awful. They may not be hypocrites, but are self deceived. The fatal error with such persons undoubtedly consists in some self-righteous dependence short of Christ. Perhaps they trust to the appointed means of edification, and make a righteousness of these, or of their supposed faith and acquiescence in what they conceive to be the Gospel; or it may be to zeal for some of its



doctrines, which, in a certain way, may be held separate from Christ, especially in a country where they enter into the general profession that is made. To such persons the Scriptures say, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." They call on them to attend to the awful denunciations of wrath against the workers of iniquity, and against those who say, Lord, Lord, and do not what he commands. Let them measure themselves, not by one another, but by the word of God, and giving up all their false refuges in which they trust, and which have not profited them, let them come unto Jesus Christ, and he will give them rest, taking upon them his yoke which is easy, and his burden which is light.

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THOSE who NEGLECT the salvation of the Gospel, are such as swim with the tide of the present world; who, wholly engrossed with the business or pleasures of life, give themselves no concern about a future state. In a country where the Christian religion is generally professed, these persons take the name of Christians; and in a Pagan or Mahometan country, they would, as a matter of course, and as conducive to their present interest and quiet, profess Mahometanism or Paganism. The Scriptures contain many aw-



ful warnings to such people, and often expostulate with them on the folly of the choice they make, in preferring the vain things of this world to “durable riches and righteousness.”

The pitiable state of a man who, forgetful of God, prospers in this world, is thus described, Job xxi. 7:—“Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ: they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore, they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him; and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?”—“God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction; and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?”



The parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, in which no particular sins are laid to the charge of the former, only he is represented as taking his portion in this world, is peculiarly alarming to those who live without God in the world, and “who mind earthly things.” He had his good things in this life. He died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes for relief, being in torment. But it was too late. A great gulf was fixed before him, which would for ever prevent his escape from that state of hopeless misery. How little do the things of time appear, when brought into comparison with the realities of the eternal world! How solemn is the thought, that all must enter into that world! “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.”—“I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works:—and who-



soever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.”—“ These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”—“ But, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

In their own defence, when reminded of their danger, those who neglect the Gospel frequently resort to the mistaken interpretation of that passage, “ Charity shall cover the multitude of sins ;” as if, whatever meaning they put on the word *charity* or *love*, it could make any atonement or compensation for sin ; and as if the plain meaning of the passage was not this,—that love leads us to cover the faults of others, instead of being ready to expose and take hold of them. Another perverted application of the term *charity*, is representing it to consist in judging every one to be in a safe state, and walking in the narrow way that leads to life, when there is no evidence that this is the case. This is one of those engines of the god of this world, by which he blinds men’s minds, and teaches them to lull one another into fatal security, saying, “ Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” What should we say of a person who insisted that a man in a fever was in good health, or if on the brink of a precipice in the dark that he was in no danger ? Would this be a proof of love ? It



would be a proof of either total want of discernment, or of total indifference to such a man and all his concerns. Love, where danger is apprehended, is quick in taking the alarm, and in using every means in its power to avert the evil, although, instead of thanks, it should meet with repulsion. How common is it also to speak of all who die, as going to heaven as a matter of course; although the Scriptures declare, that “many are called, but few are chosen;” that “strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it!”

Another false maxim, as it applies to the people of the world, is frequently heard,—“Everything is for the best.” Under the government of God, taking the whole into account, undoubtedly this is true. It is also true individually of the people of God, that *all* things work together for their good. But so far is it from being the fact in respect to those “that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,” that, except they be converted, every thing will work for their final ruin. How then shall they escape, who “neglect so great salvation?” By every consideration interesting



and alarming to the human mind, such should be induced to lay to heart the things that belong to their peace, before they be hid from their eyes. “ Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

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PERSONS who OPPOSE the Gospel are generally such as are of a speculative turn of mind, who value themselves on being free from vulgar prejudices. Their opposition does not so often proceed on the ground of want of evidence to the truth of Christianity, as on that of the difficulties with which they suppose it to be encumbered, and which, according to the views they have formed of God and of themselves, render it, they conceive, incredible and unworthy of regard. Thus, by the pride of reason, and through “ opposition of science falsely so called,” the god of this world hath blinded their mind, “ lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” It would be well for such persons to consider, that “ the whole analogy of nature renders it credible beforehand, that, supposing a revelation to be made, it must contain many things very different from what we



should have expected, and such as we should be unable to explain and account for. That which affords a sufficient answer to objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the constitution of nature, is its being a system or scheme imperfectly comprehended,—a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which is carried on by general laws. For from these things it has been proved, not only to be possible, but also to be credible, that those things which are objected against may be consistent with wisdom, justice, and goodness, nay may be instances of them ; and even that the constitution and government of nature may be perfect in the highest possible degree. If Christianity, then, be a scheme of the like kind, it is evident the like objections against it must admit of the like answer. Christianity, as a whole, is a scheme quite beyond our comprehension, consisting of various parts, and a mysterious economy, which has been carrying on from the time the world came into its present wretched state, and is still carrying on for its recovery by a divine person, the Messiah.” How vain, then, are objections against a plan so extensive, and of a nature so elevated of which but a part is seen, because not comprehended. Even human plans, when par-



tially submitted to inspection, cannot be understood.

“What if there should be some incomprehensible doctrines in the Christian religion, some circumstances which, in their causes or their consequences, surpass the reach of human reason; are they to be rejected on that account?—Weigh the matter fairly, and consider whether revealed religion be not, in this respect, just upon the same footing with every other object of your contemplation. Even in mathematics, the science of demonstration itself, though you get over its first principles, and learn to digest the idea of a point without parts, a line without breadth, and a surface without thickness; yet you will find yourself at a loss to comprehend the perpetual approximation of lines which can never meet, the doctrine of incommensurables, and of an infinity of infinites, each infinitely greater or infinitely less, not only than any finite quantity, but than each other. In physics, you cannot comprehend the primary cause of any thing; nor of the light, by which you see; nor of the elasticity of the air, by which you hear; nor of the fire, by which you are warmed. In physiology, you cannot tell what first gave motion to the heart, nor what continues it; nor why its



motion is less voluntary than that of the lungs; nor why you are able to move your arm to the right or left by a simple volition. You cannot explain the cause of animal heat; nor comprehend the principle by which your body was at first formed; nor by which it is sustained; nor by which it will be reduced to earth. You cannot comprehend the eternity or omnipresence of the Deity; nor why he did not make all his creatures equally perfect; nor why he did not create them sooner. In short, you cannot look into any branch of knowledge, but you will meet with subjects above your comprehension. The fall and the redemption of human kind are not more incomprehensible than the creation and the conservation of the universe: the infinite Author of the works of providence and of nature is equally inscrutable, equally past our finding out in them both."

Such considerations ought to come home to every rational man, and to remind him how little he really knows; and that if, on account of the difficulties which on all hands present themselves, he rejects one thing, he must reject every thing. Is he then excusable in rejecting Christianity, because of difficulties which, although they may be paradoxes, are not contradictions; while he



gets over such difficulties on other subjects, where he finds it for his immediate interest to do so? How shall he answer for this when called at his death to stand before the Judge, and to receive a sentence, which he may be assured will be just as well as final!

But let no man deceive himself. It is not on account of the difficulties attending it that he rejects the Gospel. If it were so, he could not surmount similar difficulties in other cases. It is owing to the evil heart of unbelief, rising in rebellion against that awful yet consistent view of the divine Majesty given in the Scriptures; which, if admitted, would lay him low in the dust before God, and compel him to cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He would not any longer trust to that proud morality according to which he thinks he walks very uprightly, doing justice and acting benevolently. He may cherish the fond idea of his own goodness, and measuring himself by others, be persuaded that in many things his conduct is more consistent and more proper than theirs; but if he knows any thing of his own heart, and attends to the remains of that law which is written there, he must be conscious, that, even on his own principles, he has *sinned and come short*. Then what is his refuge? It is only this, "God



will not require perfect obedience from an imperfect creature." Here his system exactly coincides with that of those who are Christians only in form. And, in fact, at bottom they are both one. But is he to go into eternity on this precarious ground, "God will not require perfect obedience from an imperfect creature?" By what analogy, or in what possible way, does he arrive at this conclusion? Does not the demand of perfect obedience enter into every idea that we form of a law? Are not law and obedience, to the extent of the law, exact counterparts? Was there ever a law in the world that did not require perfect obedience? And what is the *imperfection* pleaded? Is it any thing but propensity to sin? And shall *that* excuse sin? The word imperfect is therefore here substituted for depravity. For, let it be remembered, that the obedience required of a creature, is in proportion to the power of that creature. The law under which man is placed requires him "to love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, and to love his neighbour as himself." There is nothing here required above a man's power, and therefore no ground is left for pleading imperfection in default of obedience. The law is holy,



*just*, and good. It requires for God nothing above a man's strength, and for his neighbour nothing beyond what he does for himself.

When a man commits theft or murder, will the plea be sustained in court that he is an "imperfect creature?" If then a man, from not having the fear or love of God, takes his name in vain, or fails to render to him that homage which, as the creature of God, it is his duty to yield,—if he will pay no adequate attention to the evidence which God has given of a revelation of his will, or to understand what his will is, and to obey it, is it reasonable that his plea of being an imperfect creature should be sustained by the law of God any more than by the law of man? At any rate, has such an one done all that, according to his own feelings and views as an imperfect creature, it was in his power to do, and that at all times? Has he done as well as he could? Surely, on this ground at least, he must confess he is guilty. He should also remember, that openly acknowledged reverence for God, the Universal Sovereign, expressed in outward acts of homage, is laid aside by him. Religion does not enter into his plan of morality. It is not with him the root from whence the latter springs. If,



then, he should find at last that the love of God, as well as the love of man, and the former expressed in some visible manner, in acknowledgment of his allegiance as a creature, was required, he will, when it is too late, discover his error, without being able to plead that it was not sufficiently obvious. “The bed is shorter than that he can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” After all vain excuses shall be swept away, and when the disembodied spirit shall stand in His presence before whom all things are naked and opened, the sum of the whole we are warranted by Scripture to say, will be this, “He loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil.”

If it should be objected, that, “supposing the influences of the Spirit of God to be necessary, in order to the reception of the Gospel, those who are not favoured with them cannot be to blame for neglecting it.” This, it must be replied, by no means follows. Undoubtedly, men are to blame for not at once submitting to God, when he makes known to them his will with such abundant evidence. If, when this evidence of the truth of the Gospel is set before men, greater and stronger than they proceed upon daily and hour-



ly in all the concerns of life, rational creatures are not blameable in not acting upon it, then no case can be conceived in which men should be blamed. Man's inability to turn of himself to God is of the same nature with the inability of the confirmed drunkard to become sober. It is moral, not natural inability. Natural inability consists in a defect of a man's mind or body, which is an absolute obstruction in the way of his knowing or doing any thing though he be ever so desirous of accomplishing it. Natural inability, therefore, can never render men criminal. Moral inability consists in a disinclination or dislike to any thing so great, that the mind, though acting freely, that is, choosing without any external compulsion or restraint, cannot overcome that disinclination. When this disinclination in a man respects what is good, it cannot be separated from blame; and the greater it is, the greater blame attaches to him. All men practically make these distinctions, and judge and act on them towards each other every day. Although, therefore, the propensity of men to stand out in a state of independence against God, which is the very ground of blame, is so great that it requires divine influence to overcome it, the absence of this influence does not remove this blame. Is there no blame when men obstinately act, in respect to religion, different-



ly from what they do in every thing relating to this life,—when they most irrationally fortify themselves against a charge of guilt and the threatening of punishment, which in their consciences they must after all in some measure admit, and which by their fears they anticipate, while, like Naaman, they spurn at a simple and perfect remedy, because it is mortifying to their pride? Most of these persons must also allow, that while desirous of improving their minds by the acquisition of various kinds of useful knowledge, the study of the nature and evidence of the Christian religion has never seriously engaged their attention. Those, besides, have no right to complain of the want of divine influence, who deride its existence, and count it enthusiasm, who conceive that their hearts are not so bad, but that by attention they can make themselves good without it. By thus denying the necessity of divine influence, and yet continuing, as *they know*, justly chargeable with sin, they condemn themselves. “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin : but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth.”

What then, it may be said, is to be done, in order to obtain salvation by the Gospel? “What must I do to be saved?” “*Believe on the Lord Je-*



*sus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" This is the explicit answer of an Apostle to the above question when put to him; and according to the whole revelation of God, there is no other that can be given to any man in the world, let his character or circumstances be what they may.

To the same purpose the Jews said to Jesus Christ, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" He answered, "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*" As soon as this answer was given to the Jews, their immediate reply was, "What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?" And this is the very reply that those who continue to oppose the Gospel generally make when called to believe it, "We want evidence of its truth." These Jews had just before abundance of evidence given them, and we may still ask any man who has taken the trouble to examine it, Whether there be not sufficient evidence provided to convince every rational being of the truth and authority of the Christian religion?

But you reply, "The Scriptures do not allow us to make use of our reason, and require us to believe things contrary to reason." Nothing of this kind is the case, reason itself being judge.



What do they require you to believe? They require you to believe that God is holy and just, and that from his nature he must hate and punish sin. Is this contrary to your reason? They require you to believe that the law of God is perfect, and that he commands all his intelligent creatures to obey it. And as this law, (than which nothing can be more excellent, and which is the law of *love*,) is guarded by sanctions, as every law must be, if they break it, thy shall be condemned and punished. Is this contrary to your reason? They require you to believe that you have broken this law, and have come short of its requirements. Do you not *know* that this is the case? They require you to believe, that as you are guilty, so you are condemned to suffer that punishment which is the sanction of God's holy law. Is this contrary to reason? They tell you, that when, from the nature of the case, it was impossible that deliverance should arise from any other quarter, God himself, in a way consistent both with justice and mercy, provided an atonement or covering for guilt, and a perfect righteousness in the person of a voluntary surety or substitute. A way in which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteous-



ness, and which in the most solemn manner demonstrates, that sin and suffering are inseparable, and that holiness is ever the object of his love. And they inform you, that if you will believe that what God has thus declared is truth, and submit to him, you shall have the benefit of all this, and shall be treated as a son of God, who will preserve you from evil, and delivering you from your present sinful condition, will train you for glory and immortality in a future state of existence. Is this contrary to reason? Considering the abundant evidence which God has given you, that this message of reconciliation and mercy is from himself, the Scriptures further declare, That "he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." This is not contrary to reason.

But you again recur to the "difficulties," and say, that, along with these things, there are others which your reason will not allow you to believe; such as the mode of the existence of Deity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and that God should have created beings who he knew would break his law and be miserable. Do you not perceive, that these are matters of which reason has not sufficient information or even power to judge,



and that therefore they are not contrary to reason, although beyond it. The Scriptures call on you to believe facts, such as the existence of God, and his operations as they refer to you; but they do not require you to believe the *mode* of the existence of Deity, or *how* the divine and human natures are united. And can that man say that these things are contrary to his reason, who *cannot comprehend himself*—the nature of his own soul, or how his soul and body are united; but who yet believes, and must believe the existence of the one and the union of the others? As to the existence of evil, all the powers of man cannot develop the cause of its introduction, while every one feels its effects, and believes its reality.

Those who believe the Scriptures, use their reason in the only legitimate way in which reason can be used,—they judge by reason of what is within the sphere of reason. The Scriptures appeal to reason; but they call on men to judge soundly, and not rashly, partially, or superficially. “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” It is owing to pride and folly, not to reason, that men reject certain things in Scripture be-



cause they do not comprehend them, while, from their nature, they are entirely beyond the limits of their reason. We should count that man a fool, who would not warm himself by the fire because he cannot explain *how* the fire burns ; or who would not eat his food, because he does not know *how* it can be converted into the matter of which his body is composed. What should we say of the man who would not admit that there is any such thing as evil, natural or moral, in the world, because it is *contrary to his reason* that it should exist in the work of a Being infinitely powerful, wise, and good ? But perhaps you do not use your reason at all on the subject of religion. Perhaps you are afraid to use it, lest you should discover more than you wish. Perhaps, if you are partial to Mr Hume's writings, you have taken his advice on this subject. "As the violations," says he, "of truth are more common in the testimony concerning religious miracles, than in that concerning any other matter of fact ; this must diminish very much the authority of the former testimony, and make us FORM A GENERAL RESOLUTION, *never to lend any attention to it, with WHATEVER specious pretext it may be covered.*"



Instead of acting rationally in rejecting the Gospel on such as the above grounds, you pervert and misapply reason in a manner which, were you to act consistently, would totally unfit you for the business of the world, and even for the preservation of your life. You scorn to confess yourself guilty, and to come as such to God to receive a free pardon, and a righteousness provided by another. You seek to be justified by the law ; but, feeling that you cannot come up to its perfection, you bring it down to your own standard, and think to answer its demands by your partial and scanty obedience. In order to satisfy yourself with this view of the matter, you represent God to your imagination as altogether such an one as yourself. You form an idea of him which perfectly suits your supposed interests and low views of rectitude. You admit his goodness and mercy, but divest him of his justice and holiness. Having substituted this imagination for the true God, and set up this idol in your mind, it gives you a certain degree of satisfaction, and so far lulls your conscience, as to enable you, with a tolerable degree of security, to give yourself up to the love of the world in that way which most suits the peculiar character or bent of your mind,



whether it be the love of riches, of pleasure, or of power. The Gospel, on the other hand, transferring the views of man from this transitory scene, and opposing itself to vanity and folly in every shape, but opening the brightest prospects of future glory, displays the harmonious perfection of the attributes of God. Goodness and mercy are every way conspicuous; but they are exercised in perfect consistency with the most absolute regard to justice and holiness. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, mercy and truth shall go before his face." Seriously consider if this be not rational, and accept of that mercy which the Gospel reveals.

The Scriptures reason with, persuade, command, and beseech you, to be reconciled to God, in consideration of your helpless and ruined condition, and of that full provision which is made for your recovery. "Now, then," says an Apostle, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." After such considerations being presented, and such intreaties as these, if you still oppose yourself to them, is it not *reasonable*

Do not credit beyond what you can see. Be assured



for the same Apostle to say, as he did to the Jews, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean."—"Seeing ye put the word of God from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Consider, then, the earnest, pressing, and unencumbered invitations of the Gospel. This free, unmerited salvation, and the willingness and ability of the Redeemer to save to the uttermost, are beautifully illustrated by the account of the thief on the cross. Be assured there was nothing peculiar in his case, in respect to his being accepted of God. The bodily presence of the Saviour made no difference. If, in any circumstances whatever, you apply to Him, he is equally near to save you, and he will save you. And, whatever your character may be, if you shall be rescued from final misery, and ultimately brought to glory, it will be on the very same footing on which that man is now in paradise. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and



he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

No previous degree of depravity, ingratitude, rebellion, or forgetfulness of God, through a long life, can disqualify you. No prerequisites on your part, for this salvation, are required, or are possible. The Gospel is adapted for those who are guilty, ruined by sin, and children of wrath. It is a covering, a remedy in all cases, and in every season. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." Do not be deterred by the difficulties which still may appear to accompany this doctrine, from the reception of benefits so immense. To require to have all difficulties cleared, "is the same as requiring to comprehend the Divine nature, and the whole plan of Providence from everlasting to everlasting." Many of these difficulties may be referred to your own limited capacity in the present state. What you know not now, if saved from wrath, you shall know hereafter, as far as will be necessary for the enjoyment of complete happiness and glory. In the mean time, it is an important part of your submission to God to give him credit beyond what you can see. Be assured



the Judge of all the earth will do right. You are on the brink of eternity. Without this Gospel, it is in vain for any man to pretend that he is not entirely in the dark with respect to his future condition: Except it be, indeed, that there are certain forebodings in the mind, in regard to the eternal state, and apprehensions that all is not as it should be;—forebodings and apprehensions, which the cares and amusements of life may lull to sleep, but which, on the approach of death, will resume their force.

Consider once more the strength of the evidence of so many various kinds, for the truth of the Christian religion, against which you stake your eternal welfare. For, *if it be true*, those who reject it, cast out from the presence of God, will be miserable for ever. Were a miracle wrought before you, you say you would believe. But many saw miracles, yet believed not the truth which these miracles proved. If, however, in a similar situation, you would act more rationally, you have an opportunity of being satisfied. There are prophecies which foretell such combinations of circumstances, at such distant periods, that it is morally certain they could not be what are called fortunate conjectures, and therefore, equally with miracles, they indicate divine interposition.



A great body of these has, in the foregoing pages, been brought under your notice. They are not detached predictions, but a system of prophecy extending through thousands of years. Consider that the book which contains them was translated into Greek nearly 300 years before the coming of Christ, and by that means was in the hands of the whole civilized world. This cannot be disputed. From the effect they produced, it is also beyond dispute, that these prophecies were sufficiently clear and definite to answer their professed purpose, while the appearance of Jesus Christ is an historical fact.

Consider another remarkable circumstance which has also been brought forward. The prophet Daniel foretold the succession of the *four* great empires of the world; the division of the last of them into *ten* kingdoms, and the rise of another power from the *midst* of them, *diverse* from all the rest, who was to usurp dominion over them, and to be particularly distinguished by religious persecution. This prediction was uttered above 500 years before the Christian æra, and while only the first of these monarchies subsisted. Every thing to the present day verifies this prophecy, repeated by Daniel in two different forms, the one as revealed



to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the other to himself. We have seen it taken up and amplified, by two other writers, above 600 years afterwards, as far as it was then unfulfilled. But what is most to the purpose, we have observed by the writings of the early Christians, especially in a public apology for the Christian religion, in the year 198, that what was then unaccomplished of this prophecy, was understood and plainly announced by them. They declared that ten kings should, on its subversion, share the Roman empire, and that an eleventh power, which they denominated "Antichrist," should overcome them all. To the proofs of this already given, may be added what Chrysostom says, who wrote about the year 398. "When the Roman Imperial supremacy," says he, "shall be finally abolished, then *that power* will come. When that supremacy shall be dissolved, then will *He* obtrude himself into the vacancy of empire, and will endeavour to usurp to himself all power, in things appertaining both to men and to God. But as the empires which were before his time were each dissolved, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, and that of the Persians by the Macedonians, and that of the Macedonians by the Romans; so also shall the empire of the



Romans be dissolved by Antichrist, but he himself by Christ."

The division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms actually took place, and an eleventh power, verifying the minute descriptions of the prophecies, and entirely of a different kind from any other that ever has been on earth, arose among them, usurped dominion over them, and to this day, although in its decline, continues to possess considerable power and influence.

Such predictions, so numerous, so well authenticated, so particular, and so clearly explained beforehand, which are *still fulfilling*, and which have stood the test of more than 2000 years, afford a moral certainty of divine interposition.

Your attention has been turned to the degraded state of the *Heathen World* in respect to religion; the infamous characters of the deities that Idolaters feigned to themselves and worshipped; and the impure and flagitious services which they practised, and believed to be acceptable to their gods. We have observed the temporizing and dishonest conduct of the philosophers, who, knowing more than the body of the people, kept back that truth with which they were acquainted, and themselves conformed to the usual religious rites, however degrading and absurd. Nor did



they by this means escape the general contamination of manners, which followed from the common perverted ideas of religion. On the contrary, they practised those vices that have so justly stigmatised the most civilized of the ancient nations. The cruel practices which were adopted for amusement or convenience, they did not oppose.

These men, who ought to have been the leaders in whatever is good or praise-worthy in society, often recommend, by their writings, the very reverse. Many of the laws of Lycurgus, who is extolled by Plutarch as a perfectly wise man, were defective in justice and honesty, and enjoined the grossest violations of common decency. According to them, the young women appeared naked in the public exercises, and at the festivals and sacrifices. The young men at Sparta were trained to dexterity in committing theft. Plato allowed of lying, and thought it proper that rulers should frequently practise deceit for the benefit of their subjects. Aristippus, the scholar of Socrates, maintained that it was lawful for a wise man to steal, commit adultery, and sacrilege, when opportunity offered; for that none of these actions were naturally evil, setting aside the vulgar opinion which was introduced into the world by silly



and illiterate people; and that a wise man might publicly, without shame or scandal, keep company with harlots, if his inclination led him to it. Owing to such sentiments, and to divorces being permitted on very slight pretences, both by Greek and Roman legislators, the married state fell into such disrepute and contempt, that it became necessary to force men to marriage by penal laws!

The slightest consideration, then, of the moral state of the Heathen world,\* and of the ignorance

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\* Mr Hume gives the following account of an accomplished Athenian:

“ I think I have fairly made it appear, that an Athenian man of merit might be such a one as with us would pass for incestuous, a parricide, an assassin, an ungrateful perjured traitor, and something else too abominable to be named; not to mention his rusticity and ill manners. And having lived in this manner, his death might be entirely suitable: He might conclude the scene by a desperate act of self-murder, and die with the most absurd blasphemies in his mouth. And, notwithstanding all this, he shall have statues, if not altars, erected to his memory; poems and orations shall be composed in his praise; great sects shall be proud of calling themselves by his name; and the most distant posterity shall blindly continue their admiration: Though, were such a one to arise among themselves, they would justly regard him with horror and execration.” HUME’S *Essays*, Vol. II. p. 399.

In a note at bottom of page 398, Mr Hume mentions that the laws of Athens allowed a man to marry his sister by the father; and refers to a law of Solon of the most disgraceful nature.



of the wisest among those who belonged to it, of all that is of most importance for man to know, may convince any one of the necessity of a revelation from God. While, on the other hand, the good effects which, even in this world, have been produced by the Christian religion, are a strong argument in favour of its divine origin. The banishing of the Pagan religion, with all its train of cruelties and superstition, so degrading, as well as corrupting to the human mind, must be allowed to be a singular benefit to mankind.

You have seen that the *Genuineness* and *Authenticity* of the Scriptures is proved in a way the most unexceptionable. Whoever refuses to receive them as authentic, must give up all reliance on history, and equally reject other writings, received by every one without the smallest hesitation, but which are not supported by proofs nearly so strong, so direct, or so numerous, as those that belong to the Sacred Volume.

The claim of *Inspiration*, where so many facts are circumstantially related, and where the universal rules of moral conduct are engrossed, brings the truth of the Scriptures to the highest test, which no writings of an inferior origin could endure. But they have stood it in the fullest sense; and the severest scrutinies of the ablest



opposers, for eighteen centuries, have not been able to remove them from this high ground.

The *History* and the *Miracles*, the *Types* and the *Prophecies*, of the Old Testament Scriptures, are entirely consistent with themselves, and point to one grand object of consummation. Their perspicuity and force, in relation to that object, is attested by the *Expectation* which they excited throughout the world of its accomplishment.

They were verified by the coming of ONE, at the time and in the place predicted, in whom they all have a full and consistent accomplishment. To no other person that ever appeared in the world, can they be made to apply. This accomplishment is the more surprising, as features so seemingly opposite and irreconcilable, are foretold to belong to the MESSIAH, in whom they unite.

You have next seen the testimony of *Eye witnesses* and *Friends*, connected and independent, to facts of which they were competent judges; and whose sincerity in what they attest is stamped by their long and uniform adherence to that testimony, to which they sacrificed every thing valuable to them in this world.

Fresh testimony arises from strenuous *Opponents*, and that of the most unexceptionable



kind. In the course of their opposition, by their constant reference to the *facts* of Christianity, they authenticate them in the strongest manner. *Historians*, who incidentally mention the subject, do the same; and the public *Edicts* of the Roman government not only bear testimony to the existence of the Christian religion, but prove its extensive and rapid progress, as well as the steady adherence of the early Christians to their profession.

The *Success* of the Gospel is another source of testimony. The struggle betwixt Christianity supported by its own evidence, and Paganism maintained by all the power and learning in the world, terminated in the total subversion of the latter.

Testimony, likewise, from various *Traditions*, Customs, and Observances of worship, from *every part* of the world, as well as corroborating evidence from the most ancient *Histories*, and also from *Natural Appearances*, confirm the truth of sacred history.

With all this "CLOUD OF WITNESSES" on the one hand, there is not the shadow of *Opposing Testimony* on the other; which, considering the interests involved in putting down the new religion, is of itself conclusive on the subject.



No denial of its facts and miracles proceeds from Judea, where they were witnessed. On the contrary, explicit declarations of their reality, by the most determined opposers, are published in their own age at Jerusalem. The early heathen writers against the Christian religion, all *admit* and reason on them; and not one word to invalidate them proceeds from the Roman government, which so violently persecuted and strove to put it down. You have, therefore, the *concurring testimony* to the *facts* of Christianity, and to the *miracles* of Jesus, of the *whole age* in which they took place, *without ONE dissenting voice.*

This UNANIMOUS testimony, from persons of all descriptions, is not such as proceeds from people indifferent about the matter, who would take it upon trust, and neglect to examine it; but from those who entered warmly into the business, either in the way of the most ardent support, or of the most determined opposition. *Attestation so forcible, cannot be produced for any other fact in the world.* Never were such unequivocal proofs collected on any other question. Those who adhered to Christianity, gave up their all in supporting it. The Jewish rulers lost their all in opposing it. Of others who set themselves against it, such as valued their Religion or Philo-



sophy, found them degraded and exploded. Those in Power, found all their efforts against it baffled. The concussion was felt from the Jew to the Gentile; from the "Shrine maker" to the Priest; and from the "Craftsman" to the Emperor of the Heathen world.

Keeping in view this body of evidence, drawn from *fact* which you cannot controvert, whence do you think came the BIBLE, and how was it compiled? It is entirely different from any other book. "It is the only book, excepting such as are copied from it, which gives an account of the world as God's world. It begins with an account of his creation of it, to ascertain who he is, concerning whose providence, commands, promises, and threatenings, this sacred book all along treats." It is essentially different from the writings of those who oppose Divine revelation, who, if they allow that God created the world, do all in their power to exclude him from its management, and even from any interference in it, by placing every thing under the direction of what they call "Nature," which has been justly termed the Deist's god. On the contrary, the Bible, not only in treating of the management of the material world, but in recording the histories of nations and individuals, invariably keeps in view the hand of the Almighty. Thus, it refers all things to their



proper and ultimate cause, and fixes an impression on the mind of his constant superintendence and agency. The attention of the Christian is thus turned from secondary and inferior objects, while he is led to fix his reliance on his Heavenly Father; recollecting that, without Him, a sparrow shall not fall on the ground, and that "he that built all things is God." \*

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\* In compliance with custom, or perhaps to gratify the avidity of knowing the causes of things, we call the laws of nature causes and active powers. So we speak of the powers of gravitation, of magnetism, of electricity. We call them causes of many of the phenomena of nature; and such they are esteemed by the ignorant and the half learned. But those of juster discernment see that laws of nature are not agents. They are not endowed with active power, and therefore cannot be causes in the proper sense.—Ask an unlearned sailor the cause of the motion of the needle in the compass when a magnet is brought near to it. He tells you it is the magnet; and the proof is clear, for remove the magnet, and the effect ceases. Ask a Cartesian philosopher. He pities the ignorance of the sailor. The effect is produced, he says, by magnetic effluvia which passes from the magnet to the needle. He can even shew you in a figure where these magnetic effluvia issue from the magnet, what round they take, and how they return home again. And thus he thinks he comprehends perfectly how and by what cause the motion of the needle is produced. A Newtonian philosopher enquires what proof can be offered for the existence of the magnetic effluvia, and can find none. He therefore holds it as a fiction, and confesses his ignorance of the real cause of this motion. These three persons differ much in their sentiments with regard to the real cause of this phenomenon; and the man who knows most, is sensible that he knows nothing of the matter. REID *on the Active Powers*.



The Bible, as soon as it has related the entrance of sin, assures man that every thing around him is essentially altered. All things at first were created "very good;" but now the ground is cursed for the sake of man. "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." No condition of life exempts from this sentence any individual of the race of Adam. On the whole, you will find the course of your life, as well as its termination, to be what is here described. You may possess all the means of enjoyment that Solomon did; you may be able, as he was, to command every expedient for promoting it; but when you sum up the whole, even in the midst of the career you run, and much more when stretched on the bed of death, you will be forced to come to the same conclusion at which he arrived.

"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure; and, behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it? I sought



in my heart to give myself unto wine, (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom,) and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces. I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and, behold all was vanity and



vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

Thus, the Bible presents a different view of this world from what we find any where else, although the account it gives comes home to the experience of every one who passes through life. It constantly draws off men's attention from a scene which, from its fleeting nature, if no other evil adhered to it, is *stamped with vanity*, while it directs them to a world of blessedness and joy.

The whole tendency of the Bible is to promote the holiness and the happiness of man. It assures him, that it is owing to want of holiness that he is not happy, and that all his uneasiness is owing to his distance from God. But it shews him the way of reconciliation and recovery, and points out the path to glory, honour, and immortality.

Mr Hume says of the Pentateuch, that the least part of it consists in precepts of morality. But if that be preceptive which directs to happiness and teaches to avoid misery, which exhorts to virtue and warns against vice; then every line of the Pentateuch contains precepts of morality. The exhibition of the character of God,—the histories of men, with the approbation and consequences of what is good, and the ex-



posure of evil and its fatal effects,—with the whole of the ritual and typical system, the import and moral of which is, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the *Sin* of the world,”—as well as the direct admonitions which the Pentateuch contains, all concentrate in this one grand *moral precept*,—“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”

The effects produced by the Bible in promoting the welfare and happiness of society, when they terminate with this life only, are very considerable. Even where its ultimate object is not attained, it produces sobriety, integrity, and peace among men, in a very great degree. Consider the striking testimony to this in the present day, from men of the world who are ignorant of its highest value. They are assisting in circulating the Bible, and providing means to enable the people to read it. What a tribute of homage to the Bible is this! That book condemns them and their ways, as living “without God and without hope in the world, and minding earthly things;” yet they see it to be conducive to calm the turbulence of human passions, which, in a particular crisis of the world, it is difficult to restrain from breaking out in acts of violence and bloodshed. How comes it that the Bible, after



all the books that have been written, is the only one fit for this purpose?

Once more, then, it may be asked, what account do you give to yourself of the Bible? Whence came it? Do you imagine it is a fiction? Is it possible to conceive, that such a variety of *kinds* of evidence should all contribute to support what is false? Every thing *external*, with which it has the smallest connection, yields its testimony, while nothing of this sort can be made to bear against it. Of the multitude of public facts interwoven in its texture, not one can be controverted. Every thing *internal* affords confirmation. The character of God and of the Messiah; the nature of its doctrine; the excellence of its practical precepts; the character it gives of man, applicable to every state of society, and verified in the experience of every individual; its suitableness, in all respects, to his circumstances; its consistency with itself, which has been attacked without success by enemies, and displayed by its friends in great varieties of ways; its unity of design, from the beginning to the end, written in different and distant ages, and by different men, while its whole tendency is so useful and excellent; each and all of them give attestation to it. On



the other hand, not one kind of proof can be brought against it. Nothing but truth can account for all this. Never did even the appearance of such an *assemblage* of proofs attest any falsehood, or even any other truth.

You still think it strange, if so much can be said for the truth of the Bible, that men in general do not believe it. For you are convinced in your heart, that the great body of those among whom you live, although they all take the name of Christians, *do not believe the Bible*. It does not, you are aware, influence them either in their hopes or fears. It is not the spring of their conduct and desires; and were it this moment to cease to exist, they would continue to live and to act exactly as they do at present. This then has a great effect in satisfying your mind, and preventing any anxiety on the subject that might lead to enquiry. Yet if all men firmly believed the Bible to be true, it would not add one iota to the strength of the evidence that belongs to it. We may, however, be well convinced, that in this case you would not be so easy on the subject as you are at present. But while this would by no means increase the evidence for the truth of the Bible, consider that it would greatly diminish, if



not set it aside. It would introduce a contradiction to what the Bible asserts of the state of the world. At present it describes the generality of men in respect to religion, according to fact, even in what are called Christian countries. "If," said Jesus to his disciples, "ye were of the *World*, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.—Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." Even those who most openly oppose and speak against the Bible, are included in its descriptions and preintimations. "There shall come in the last days *Scoffers*, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Thus, after the lapse of 1800 years, it exactly describes the state of the world, notwithstanding outward forms and names, which, if in the present period all men believed it, would not be the case.



The many inconsistencies of those who profess to be Christians, and who are acknowledged by others as such, strongly fortify your mind in rejecting revelation. You narrowly observe their temper and conduct, and you perceive in them much evil in various ways. In the best characters in Scripture, you will see the evil that adhered to them fully related. But what does this prove? It shews the force of human depravity, which exerts itself against the strongest motives. The evil of sin in Christians ought by no means to be extenuated; but surely what you perceive in them to be inconsistent with their profession, cannot be fairly laid to the charge of Christianity, to which it is contrary. As far as this evil goes, it does not arise from Christianity, but from the want of it. Faith and works, (meaning by works every motion of the heart, as well as the outward conduct,) are inseparable. Nothing purifies the heart but faith; but it cannot purify beyond the degree in which it exists. No man's faith in this world is perfect. And in as far as it is wanting, in that proportion will there be evil in the man, whether it appear in his outward conduct or not. Much evil, indeed, remains in Christians, which every Christian feels, and, like the Apostle Paul,



deeply laments. But this only discovers more fully the need of the great remedy for sin that is provided. It would be well were you rather to look to that remedy which is effectually, though gradually, removing in them the otherwise deadly disease of sin, than to look to the disease itself to lull yourself to rest in your dangerous state, while, though you are little aware of it, the same disease is preying on your own vitals.

But, in every point of view, this is very precarious ground on which to build an opinion of the last importance. It is much easier to say who are not, than to say who really are Christians. We are bound to treat all as Christians, who appear to be such; but in the day that is coming, "every man shall bear his own burden." Speaking, in one place, of those who professed to be his disciples, the Lord divides them into four descriptions; but although certain effects were produced on all, only one of these four knew the grace of God in truth. The others after a season fell away. In another place, he represents one half of those who continued to make a credible profession to the end, as turning out at last self-deceivers. As you cannot distinguish these classes, you see what a sandy foundation you are building on, when



you measure either Christianity itself, or your own state, by others. Besides this, there are many real Christians who are babes in Christ—not only as to the length of time since they have followed him, but who are weak in faith. In as far as this is the case, they will be “carnal,” and will “walk as men.” And here again Satan will have an advantage in hardening your mind to serve his purpose, and to conduce to your destruction. But if it please God to lead you to an acquaintance with your own heart, this will discover to you so much in yourself of what you did not see before, that while you will unfeignedly lament the inconsistencies of Christians, you will cease to turn them into an argument against Christianity, or to harden yourself in unbelief by dwelling on their shortcomings. On the contrary, you will find, in these very inconsistencies, a strong attestation to the truth of the Bible, and to the faithfulness of its descriptions.

The more every thing respecting the Bible is investigated and pressed home, the more will its truth appear conspicuous. Its evidence is such, that it is a well known and generally acknowledged fact, that every argument, which has been



brought against it by the ablest and most learned men, has been fairly and fully answered.

A native of Hindostan, converted to God, was lately asked by one of his countrymen why he had become a Christian? His answer was, "Because Christianity represents God as the *just* God, and the *Saviour*." Examine all other religions that were ever heard of, as well as every false system of Christianity, especially examine the system you rest on, whatever it may be, and you will find they all fail in one or other or both of these descriptions. The Gospel alone carries them both to their utmost extent, and unites them both. It excludes every idea of salvation by works more or less, but it magnifies the *righteousness* and the *mercy* of God.

The stroke of death will soon dissolve for ever your connection with this world. It is a serious matter. Time, if once lost, can never be recalled. The most important alternatives are before you. It will be well if, through the blessing of God, you are led to make the happy choice. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.



For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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WHILE there are many who, in various ways, reject the counsel of God against themselves, there are others who RECEIVE the word of God, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in those that believe.—“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new.” In his unconverted state, the believer may have read this declaration a thousand times, but he never saw any great importance in it, or rather never affixed to it any precise meaning at all. He had taken the name of Christian, and having, perhaps, made a strict profession of Christianity as he understood it, he did not doubt that he was what is called “a very good Christian.” He is now awakened as from a dream. He sees that formerly he was in total darkness as to spiritual things ; but the spell is broken. God has “given him a new heart, and has put a new spirit within



him ;” and his views of God, of Himself, and of the World, are changed.

That undefined idea of the mercy of God which he formerly entertained, without considering how it was reconcilable with those indications of wrath that are visible in the world, while, at the same time, there lurked a secret dread, unacknowledged even to himself, that God might at last turn out to be his enemy, is now done away. Now he beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in whose sufferings and death the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and, at the same time, his love to the guilty children of men, are revealed from heaven. Now he perceives that God is Love, and he loves God because God first loved him. This leads him to a discovery of his own character. He was always aware that, in a certain sense, he was a sinner, and not altogether what he ought to be. He was, however, accustomed to soften and palliate to his conscience what appeared wrong or defective in himself; but having now a distinct view of the ground on which man, who is guilty, can be just with his Maker, and how fellowship is restored and can be maintained with God, he is not afraid to look into his own heart, and to compare it with



the perfect standard of the holy law. The consequence is, that he sees he was justly condemned, and that he had forfeited all by sin, but that his sins are forgiven, and an inheritance beyond his most sanguine conceptions is provided for him. Thus, he has become acquainted with what his own wisdom could never have taught him, of which multitudes of the wisest men are ignorant. "Behold," he exclaims in his own name, and that of other believers, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not! Beloved now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The world he sees to be exactly what it is described in the Scriptures—full of temptation and danger, and that vanity is legibly inscribed upon it. Yet he feels how much its vanities and evils entwine around his heart, and what a powerful hold they have of him. Hence, he experiences what the Apostle Paul describes of his own internal warfare—what he declares of the manner in which he became acquainted with his si-



tuation, and also of the way in which he obtained relief.

In this situation, the Scriptures warn him that he must experience new trials, and that these are corrections of his heavenly Father, intended to embitter sin, and to wean his heart from this world, on which it is naturally so much set. This is accordingly verified in his experience. These trials are not brought upon him all at once. When the Lord conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, he “led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.” In like manner, believers are only tried as they are able to bear it. But they are assured that, through much tribulation, they must enter the kingdom of heaven. Many of their trials are peculiar to them as Christians. If they be watchful, they can trace them to some evil of which they have been guilty; and they soon learn to know that there is much retribution in this world. The word of God expressly warns against either “*fainting*” under such trials, or “*despising*” them; and when they are enabled to avoid these two extremes, to which human nature is so prone, they reap from them



the peaceable fruits of righteousness. “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.” The dispensations of God, as they affect him in his situation, circumstances of life, connections, and whatever befalls him, are observed and marked by the Christian; and they constantly lead him to see and acknowledge that invisible hand by which he is directed. “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.”

“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona,” said Jesus to Peter, “for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” God had revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and whoever believes this, “is born of God.” Christians well know that there is nothing in or about them to entitle them to this unspeakable honour and blessing. They ascribe it all to sovereign grace, free unmerited favour. Being now partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel, and their life being hid with him in God, they are become ONE with Christ. This is the foundation on which they rest for eternity, and they are well assured



that no other foundation can any man lay. So far from imagining that they have received remission of sin on account of any change in them, or of works performed by them, they know that their repentance and good works, in whatever measure they may be, are the effects and fruits of the operation of the Holy Spirit communicated through faith.

Christians, look to Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour, to whom all power in heaven and in earth is committed, who "*being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.*" Beholding him in this twofold capacity, as uniting the Divine and human natures—God manifest in the flesh, they see him in every respect qualified to be that complete Saviour which their case requires. On this point there is not the smallest difference among Christians. Here there is but one voice among them—babes, young men, and fathers. In the language of Thomas, they unite in saying, "MY LORD AND MY GOD."

The highest creature placed under the law of God, could have done no more than his *duty* in obeying it; and if he had broken it, could have borne only for himself that punishment which



justice required should be inflicted. But the dignity of the person of Jesus, the Messiah, rendered his obedience and sufferings infinitely *meritorious*; and therefore, in the way of justice, as well as mercy, what he did, and what he suffered, are placed to the account of all who are united to him by faith. These are bought with a price, even his blood. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The honour of the law is in this way maintained to the utmost, and the believer enters heaven on the footing of an obedience, which is denominated in Scripture "the righteousness of God." Thus "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

When Isaiah beheld in vision, before his incarnation, HIM who wrought this righteousness sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, he saw the seraphim standing above, who veiled their faces with their wings, and cried, "Holy, holy, holy Jehovah, God of Hosts." John also in vision afterwards saw him, "in the midst of the throne," and heard the voice of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of an-



gels round about the throne, "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Receiving, therefore, on the ground of HIS righteousness, "the promise of eternal inheritance," Christians, sensible of all their guilt and unworthiness, can with confidence say, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." Every one of those schemes, on the other hand, which human ingenuity has ever devised respecting the way in which man can be accepted by God, those which appear to come nearest to the Gospel, as well as all others, compromise the justice of God, and derogate from the honour of his holy law.

During the life of Jesus, there was a controversy betwixt him and the Jewish rulers, whether or not he was the Son of God. He affirmed that he was. They charged him with blasphemy on this account. While in his state of humiliation, this controversy was permitted to continue. But when he had finished the work that he came to perform, the question was decided by his resurrection from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Christians, therefore, now regard him as their



risen and exalted Lord,—their compassionate High Priest within the veil, who ever liveth to make intercession for them. On every one of them he lays his right hand, and says, “Fear not, I am he who was dead, and am alive, and behold I live for ever more, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death.” They look to him and confide in him, as ruling for them, watching over them, and sympathising with them. This last is a peculiarly affecting view of the suitableness of his character to all their wants. “We have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He is the good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep, and who engages that no one shall pluck them out of his hand. “My Father,” says he, “who gave them me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”—“I and my Father are one.” Notwithstanding this exalted dignity, he is not ashamed to call them his brethren, and he calls them friends. Yet in this kind and familiar intercourse, his infinite superiority must never be lost sight of. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

They also wait for his second coming. Two



great promises have been made to the people of God. One was the first coming of Messiah, and at the set time it was fulfilled. The other, for which they now wait, will be equally verified. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Impressive views of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, just in proportion as he is received by faith, penetrate and solace the minds of Christians as they pass through this world. Jesus Christ is to them the all in all, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Their regret is, that they yet know so little of him, and are so little influenced by his authority; yet, on the whole, they are enabled to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." The constraining love of Christ, amidst much depravity and weakness, is the rule and principle of their lives and conduct. They "thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Here is the source of all the good works that are acceptable to God.



Formerly they may have made many self-righteous attempts to reform themselves, but all proved ineffectual. Nothing can purify the heart but faith. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—“*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.*” Made acquainted now, in some measure, with the hardness of their own hearts; awakened from the false security they once enjoyed; turned from that state of rebellion, in which, like others around them, they formerly lived, they are filled with a sense of redeeming love, and of that compassion extended to them who are so unworthy, to whom mercy has flowed through the humiliation and sufferings of the Son of God. They therefore desire to become every day more and more “an habitation of God through the Spirit;” to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour, and to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their *reasonable* service. In entire dependence on the supply of the Spirit of Christ, without whom they can do *nothing*, they purify themselves even as Christ is pure, and “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; *for it is God which*



*worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

The High Priest, under the Mosaic dispensation, entered within the second veil once every year, not without the blood; and at the peril of his life he durst not enter it at any other time, or in any other way. Christians realize the truth, of which that was a figure. Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for them through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, they are invited to draw near, in the full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. In this way they experience the faithfulness of God as the hearer of prayer, and hold communion with him from off his mercy-seat.

When the Christian reads the Scriptures, he is struck with their dignity, which is never for a moment let down; with their authority, which is never compromised; with that fulness on every subject, which all the books that have been written from them have not exhausted; and with that unity of design, which, amidst such variety of circumstances, is always so conspicuous. Their morality, he observes, is complete. Not



one false principle can be charged upon it. Nothing can be added to it, or taken away. The excellence and usefulness of the precepts of Scripture he feels every day, as far as he is enabled to reduce them to practice. With gratitude he acknowledges the perfect suitableness to his case of the salvation of God, removing his guilt, providing the righteousness he wants, affording the assistance and protection he requires, warding off the punishment in a future state which he otherwise dreads, and promising that endless and complete happiness which alone can satisfy the desires of his mind.

The Scriptures give him so consistent a view of the character of God, and so just a representation of this world; they so entirely correspond with his inward convictions and experience; they contain so exact a description of his own heart and of all its workings; they teach a doctrine so well suited to whatever state he may be in, whether of prosperity or of adversity, of youth or of old age, of health or of sickness; so adapted even to the hour of death, when nothing he ever possessed or hoped for in the world could be of the smallest use to him, that he *knows* “of the doctrine that it is of God.” Although therefore he may be entirely ig-



norant of the evidence derived from history and other sources for the truth of the Scriptures—although he may not be able to dispute for them, or to unravel the many objections which the men of this world, “sporting with their own deceivings,” devise against them; yet as soon could they persuade him that the sun does not shine in the firmament, or that the world itself does not exist, (truths which, in their wisdom, some of them have gravely doubted), as that the Bible does not contain “the true sayings of God.” And not for ten thousand worlds could they induce him to part with the smallest portion of that hope which he has, as an anchor of his soul, both sure and stedfast, of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven after this world and its works shall be burnt up. He looks, therefore, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

FINIS.





















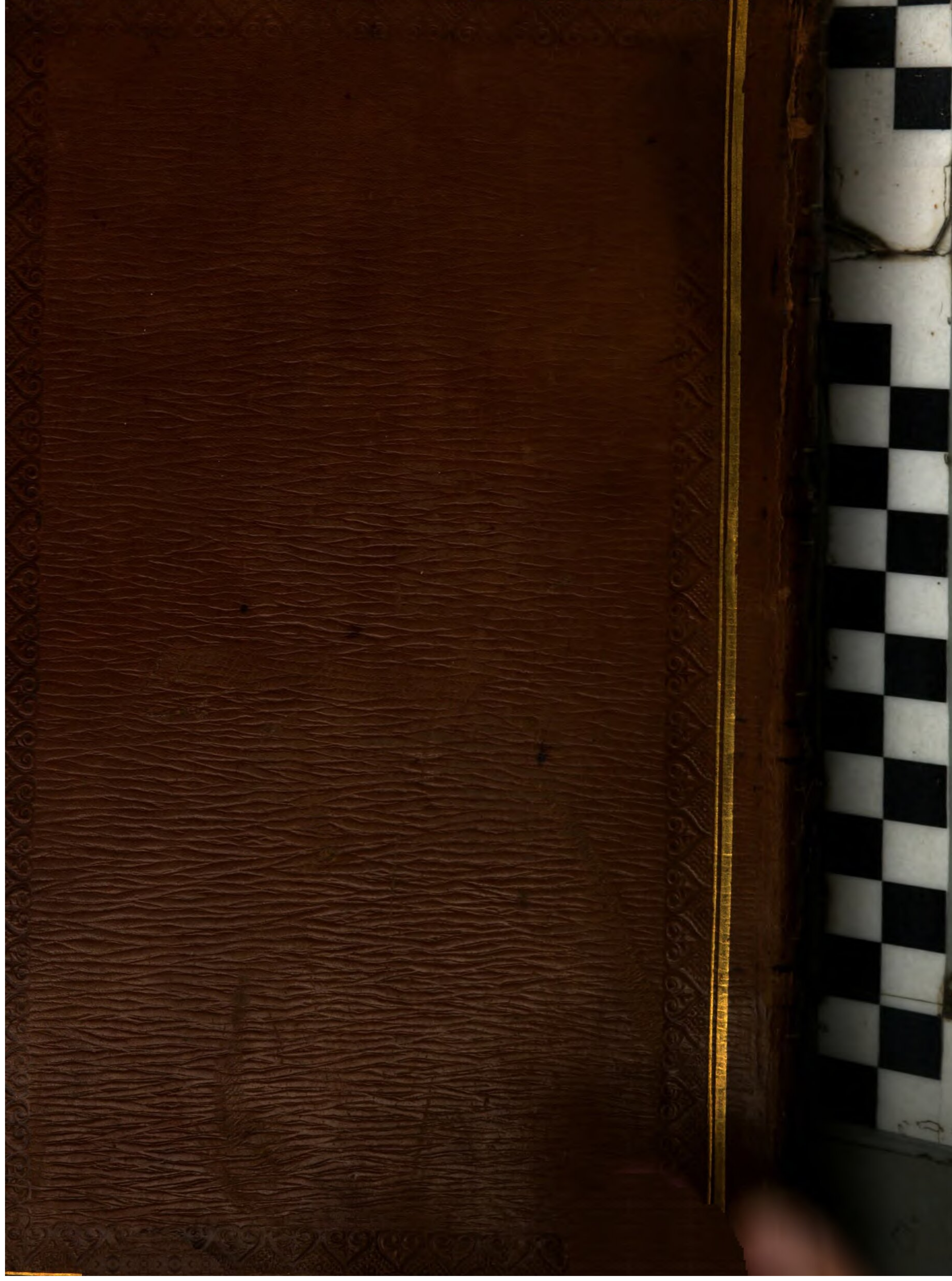














Haldane, Robert

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